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A READABLE DICTIONARY OF PHRASES,  
IDioms, AND COLLOQUIALISMS

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# A READABLE DICTIONARY OF PHRASES, IDIOMS AND COLLOQUIALISMS

*Giving the Origin, Derivation, or Source of  
Popular Words, Phrases, Idioms, and Slang*

BY

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SACRED  
TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY DEAR FATHER  
LALA HARNAM DASS SUD  
WHOM  
GOD TOOK BACK TO HIMSELF .  
IN JULY, 1913.



## PREFACE

WHEN I came over to England three years ago, I heard certain colloquial terms and phrases such as "swank," "glad eye," "masher," "floorer," "flapper," "nuts," "in a jiffy," "Well! I never did," and several others of the kind which I had never heard in India. I was struck, and, I may add, fascinated, and in the end I felt tempted to collect them in a book-form. When I was engaged upon this collection, many of my Indian and English friends advised me to write a sort of a readable dictionary, which may prove both useful and enjoyable, especially to my countrymen.

It is my opinion that a word or a phrase becomes more interesting and less likely to be forgotten when once its origin has been traced and properly dealt with. In order to do this I had naturally to consult various books, and I have taken every care to approach only reliable sources. It is in respect of the treatment of the origin of almost every word, phrase, or idiom in this book that it differs from others of its kind.

Whatever time I could spare or snatch from my study hours I have devoted to the preparing of this book, and I am not saying this to disarm criticism: I am merely stating a fact.

One thing in particular I would like to mention. In this book there are numerous terms which will prove of special interest to lovers of literature, as well as to University men. Shakespeare in particular and other masters of the English language in general are often quoted to point out the peculiar use to which they have adapted certain words in the language.

My main object, however, in compiling this book is to be of some help and use to my countrymen, and if that object I succeed in accomplishing, I shall consider myself amply rewarded.



In conclusion, I may say that I shall feel obliged to those of my readers who, seeing room for improvement in this volume, would kindly offer me their suggestions by communicating with me. These, I have no doubt, will be of help to me for a next edition of this dictionary.

I should be wanting in brotherly feeling if I failed to thank my brother, Mr. Lekh Raj Sud, L.C.E., Assistant Engineer, Kapurthala State, India, for encouragement during the progress of the work. I also extend my thanks to my Indian friend, Mr K. H. D. Cecil, for many helpful suggestions; and to Mr. Charles Radelt for supplying me with useful cuttings from various London papers and magazines.

BABU LAL SUD.

*London, 29th June, 1914.*





# A READABLE DICTIONARY OF PHRASES, IDIOMS, AND COLLOQUIALISMS

## A

**AI.** First class, the very best. It is a term applied to a vessel of the very best construction and sufficiently equipped. The full term is "AI at Lloyd's." Some writers are of opinion that the letter A denotes the quality of a ship's hull, and the No. 1 that of its equipment. Now instead of "AI at Lloyd's" AI is generally used and signifies anything that is highly excellent. "It is AI" is a common expression one hears in England.

**A.M. (or M.A.)** When the Latin form is meant, the A comes first, but in the case of English form, the M precedes A, as Master of Arts.

**ABACK.** "He was taken aback" (nautical). It means he was greatly astonished. The allusion is to the sails being suddenly shifted in order to arrest the progress of the vessel or to give it a backward motion.

**ABANDON.** It comes from the Latin *ab*, from, and *bandum*, a flag; signifying "to desert one's colours" (to fly from the flag).

**ABANDON, FORSAKE.** To abandon is to give up entirely that over which one had control; to forsake is simply to leave or withdraw either from a person or a place with whom or with which there was a previous attachment. To desert a person is to disregard him entirely and leave him permanently, thus implying a breach of duty.

**ABANDONED HABIT.** The riding costume. It is a society term.

**ABANDONMENT.** In English law this term signifies the act by which a pursuer, before final judgment, withdraws from his action on paying the costs incurred by the other party. The effect of this is that although his action is dismissed, he is at liberty to bring another action on the same grounds.

**ABATE.** It comes from the French *abattre* signifying originally to beat down or to come down. Macaulay says:—"The agony is abated," and in this case the word abate has a reference to the vigour of action. To mitigate sufferings is to lessen their intensity without relieving them altogether.

**ABBREVIATE, ABRIDGE.** To abbreviate a word is to shorten it by retaining a part which stands for the whole; to abridge a report is to put it in a condensed form and yet retain the spirit of the original.

**ABDICATE.** It comes from the Latin *ab*, from and *dicare*, to proclaim. It should be noted that this word is applied to diction, which also comes from *dicare*. We abdicate that which we have held by a certain right; we abandon that over which we have had a full and lawful control; we renounce or resign that which we may hold as our own by an act of violence. A king may abdicate the throne; a man may abandon his family; a pretender may renounce his claims to a throne; a usurper may resign his assumed power. The words "abandon" and "resign" are also used in a reflective sense: the former to express an involuntary action which is culpable, the latter to express a voluntary action which is, as a rule, proper. We say "he abandoned himself to debauchery," and "he resigned his office."

**ABEYANCE.** This term in English law signifies that a hereditament is not vested in anyone, but is suspended until the true owner appears. If it is an office, it is kept in abeyance until the right thereto is determined. When an earl dies and leaves no male heirs, his title is said to be in abeyance. A person's life interest or freehold is in abeyance after his death until his successor is found.

**ABILITY.** This word should not be confused with capacity. Ability refers to mental or bodily power; capacity is literally containing power. It should be noted however that when ability is used in the plural, it embraces both meanings.

**ABOARD.** It means on board *i.e.* literally within the walls of a ship, the Icelandic word *bord* meaning the side of a ship.

**ABOUT.** "To do a thing about right" (American), is to do it thoroughly or soundly. It is a vulgar expression and should be avoided.

**ABOVE.** It is inelegant to use above either as a noun by ellipsis of some noun as "he wrote the above," or as an adjective, as, "he submitted the above facts." Instead of saying "he wrote the above," one would properly say "he wrote the above phrase," and instead of "he submitted the above facts," one would correctly say "he submitted the above-mentioned facts."

**ABOVE, OVER, UPON.** These are almost similar words, yet have different applications with some sort of distinction. Illustrations will clearly show their respective uses. The moon and stars are above us meaning they are at a great distance from us. A cloud is over the sea meaning a cloud is hanging over the sea. My hat is upon my head means that it touches my head.

**ABOVE PAR, BELOW PAR.** Par comes from a Latin word meaning equal. Commercially it means the nominal value of a share. When a person buys a hundred pound share for more than that sum, he buys it above par, but when he buys it for less than a hundred pound, he buys it below par. In America, a person in a better state of health than usual calls himself "above par," and *vice versa*.

**ABOVE BOARD.** It means in a fair, open manner. The reference is to the playing of cards where honest players never keep their hands under the table or board.

**ABOVE YOUR HOOK.** It means "beyond your mark or comprehension." The reference is to hat-pegs placed in rows. The higher rows were above the reach of people of small stature.

**ABSCOND.** This word originally meant to conceal or to hide, but it is now generally used in the sense of stealing off secretly from a master.

**ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE.** This is said of one who has escaped from prison or from the police. The idea is of not forthcoming when wanted.

**ABSENTEE.** This term is reproachfully applied to landlords who derive rent from one country, and spend it in another. When Ireland had its own Parliament, there was no such reproach heaped upon Irish landlords who did not spend their rent-money in other countries. It was the Union that brought about a change in the habits of Irish nobility and gentry who were attracted to London and who also chose residences on the Continent. These were called "absentees."

**ABSOLUTISM.** This is a form of government in which the will of the monarch is supreme and there is no constitutional check to limit his power. The downfall of the feudal system made way for the great era of absolutism in Europe.

**ABSTRACT.** In English law the term abstract is used to signify the summary of the deeds and facts, constituting a title to land, which every seller is bound to furnish to the purchaser, unless otherwise agreed. If the abstract is defective, the purchaser must object within a certain limited time by making a requisition.

**ABUSE.** It literally means to misuse, and is always used in that sense. Although it came to mean "deceive," it has become so uncommon as to be quite obsolete. However we say "disabuse" to signify "to undeceive." He abused my kindness means he made wrong use of my kindness by taking advantage of it.

**ACADEMY.** It was a grove near Athens, wherein Plato taught. Hence, school or society.

**ACCEPTANCE, ACCEPTATION.** The difference in the two words should be noted. Acceptance simply refers to the

state of being accepted, as the acceptance of a position; acceptation means assent to another person's belief.

**ACCIDENT.** Accident is distinct from injury. An accident is something which happens to one without any known cause; injury is mental or physical pain which is the result of an accident.

**ACCOMPLICE.** The Latin *complex* means bound up with, and to be an accomplice is to be bound up with another in a project, the word always being used in a bad sense.

**ACCOMPLISH.** French for this is *accomplir*, and Latin *complere*, to fill up, to complete. Hence accomplishment conveys the idea of completeness.

Accomplish should not be confused with achieve. The former conveys the idea of completeness, and the latter that of breaking through difficulty.

**ACCORD, AWARD.** The former comes from the Latin *cor*, *cord.*, meaning heart, and therefore accord points to something dictated by the heart. In according honour to a person, we do so where it is individually due. To award a medal to a brave warrior is to show him a mark of honour by picking him out from other contestants.

**ACCORDING.** "According to Cocker." Edward Cocker was a well-known arithmetician and his great work entitled "Tutor to Writing and Arithmetic" was for a considerable time recognised as the standard authority on arithmetic, and hence the expression.

"According to Gunter." An American phrase equivalent to the English phrase "according to Cocker." Gunter was an eminent English mathematician and his name is connected with "Gunter's scale and the surveying chain" which is always known as Gunter's chain, and hence the phrase.

**ACCOUCHEMENT.** It comes from the French *a, to, and couche*, a bed. It means confinement in childbirth.

**ACCOUNT.** "On account." A business phrase used when a bargain is struck between two people and payment is partly paid, hence it means in part payment.

"To give a good account of." A student gives a good account of himself when he passes successfully and creditably. The contrary is "to give a poor account of oneself."

"We will give a good account of them." We will give them a thorough thrashing and we shall be successful.

**ACCRUE.** It comes from the Latin *crecere*, to grow. Hence the English word accrue literally means "added to something as what naturally grows out of it."

**ACHIEVE.** French *chef* means head, and thence the end of anything. The French expression *venir à chef* means to gain one's end, to accomplish, and hence, achieving has the sense of accomplishing.

**ACKNOWLEDGE.** "To acknowledge the corn." To admit the truth of a statement. When a person charged with drunkenness admits that he was drunk he acknowledges the corn.

**ACQUIRE.** "Acquire differs from obtain in this that to acquire a thing is to get it and hold it in permanent possession, whereas to obtain a thing is to get it by effort.

**ACRE.** This word which comes from the Latin *ager*, a field, originally meant any field, whatever its size. But now the English acre contains 43,560 sq. ft.

**ACROBAT.** From two Greek words meaning "to go on the extremities of one's limbs." Hence an acrobat is a person who moves on tip-toe.

**ACT, ACTION.** One word should never be used for the other. An act is something that is done, and therefore an act is a deed accomplished by an exercise of power, whereas an action is the exerting of such power; and therefore action really means the course pursued or the procedure.

"Act of God" (legal). It is that which cannot be foreseen, and, even if foreseen, cannot be prevented or averted by human agency, such as loss by lightning, storm, earthquake &c.

"To act a part" is to sham or feign.

"To act up to a promise or profession." To fulfil what one promises to do and professes to regard it as a duty.

**ACTS OF SABOTAGE.** The word sabotage comes from the French *sabot*, a shoe, signifying to kick violently. The wilful destructive acts of strikers or rebels who smash windows, pull down buildings &c., are called acts of sabotage. They indulge in these violent acts to threaten the public or the Government into giving them what they demand.

**ACTIVE, AGILE, ALERT.** Active refers to action and hence an active person is one who is given to action. Agile refers to movements that are quick and nimble, and is always used in a complimentary sense. Alert signifies watchfulness, and consequently ready to act.

**ADAM.** "Adam's ale." Pure water. The Scotch term is "Adam's wine." Hood says "We'll drink Adam's ale."

"Adam's apple." The projection in the neck under the chin. The reference is to the superstitious belief that a piece of the forbidden apple which Adam ate stuck in his throat and caused the projection.

"Adam's profession." Gardening is so designated. Adam was appointed by God to dress the "Garden of Eden." In "Hamlet" Shakespeare uses it in this sense.

"Parson Adams." In "Joseph Andrews" by Fielding there is a character of that name. He is a perfectly benevolent, simple-minded and fearless clergyman. Hence a clergyman of such character is called Parson Adams.

"A faithful Adam." A faithful old servant. In Shake-



squire's "As You Like It" a retainer of that name is a faithful servant to Orlando, and hence the expression.

"The old Adam." Adam stands for "original sin" and hence the expression means "inherent evil nature in man."

"Son of Adam." A man.

"I don't know him from Adam." I am not acquainted with him and don't know who he is.

**ADDING INSULT TO INJURY.** In one of Æsop's Fables, a bald man was bitten on the head by a fly and in trying to kill it he gave himself a hard smack on his forehead. Whereupon the fly jeered at him, remarking "You wanted to kill me for a touch—what will you do to yourself now that you have added insult to injury?"

**ADDLED.** As a rule this word is applied to eggs in a state of decay, and in that case it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *adl* meaning a disease. But this word is still used in the North of England in an entirely opposite sense, namely, that of growing or thriving. In this latter case, it comes from the old Norse *odlask* meaning to get or to grow, which exactly corresponds to the Swedish *odla*, meaning to till or to cultivate.

**ADHERENCE, ADHESION, ATTACHMENT.** Although these words were used as synonyms at one time, they are not used as such now. Adherence as a rule is applied to principles, mental or spiritual for instance "adherence to the codes of morality." Adhesion is used in connection with material things, where as attachment more or less conveys the idea of devotion and in that sense it is somewhat synonymous with adherence.

**ADIEU.** In its original form it was *à Dieu*, meaning literally "to God, but in its enlarged sense it means "to God I commend you." The French have two very happy phrases for taking leave of a friend, namely, *adieu* and *au revoir*, the latter of which refers to (our) meeting again.

**AD INTERIM.** This Latin phrase means literally during interval *i.e.* for the meantime.

**AD LIBITUM.** Latin phrase, signifying without restraint, to any extent. An abandoned rake indulges in profligacy *ad libitum*.

**ADMIRABLE CRICHTON.** James Crichton, a Scotchman, took his M.A. degree at the age of fourteen: knew several languages and was well versed in sciences at the age of twenty. Hence a prodigy in various subjects is so called.

**ADMITTANCE, ADMISSION.** Admittance simply refers to place, and admission conveys with it the idea of privilege, favour, and friendship. One may get admittance to a club and yet he may not be allowed admission as a member.

**ADULATION.** It comes from the Latin *adulari*, to fawn, to flatter. Another suggested derivation is *ad* and *aula*, a hall, *adulari* meaning "to stand waiting like a dog in the hall."

**AD VALOREM.** According to the value or price charged. An *ad valorem* duty of 5 per cent. is imposed on all goods coming into Japan.

**ADVANCE, ADVANCEMENT.** Advance in the commercial sense is a sum of money given when a bargain is struck, the remainder being made payable later. In the sentence "A is in advance of B in his knowledge of geometry," it means that A enjoys superiority over B. To get an advancement to a higher post is to be raised or lifted to something better, and hence a promotion.

**ADVANTAGE, BENEFIT.** Advantage may be obtained at the expense of another in an argument. Advantage of a good education empowers one to cope with difficulties, as education gives one a vantage ground. Benefit signifies that which results in doing good.

**ADVENTURE.** It literally means that which comes or happens, and Chaucer uses it simply in the sense of chance.

**AFFAIRE DE COEUR.** A French phrase meaning a love affair.

**AFFORD.** The term *forum* was applied to a market in the Roman times and in Middle Latin it signified market place, and from this Prov. "for," French, *four*, a certain price. It is undoubtedly from the second signification of the word that we get the English word "afford." The old English word "affer" meant to set a price on a thing.

**AFFRONT.** From the Latin *frons*, *frontis*, the forehead, hence, to affront a person is to meet him face to face, or to insult him.

**A FORTIORI.** This Latin phrase means by so much the stronger (reason).

**AFTER-DINNER MAN.** One who drinks long into the afternoon. It is the same as after-noon's man. The allusion is to the old custom of dining in the halls of Inns of Court about noon.

**AFTER ME THE DELUGE.** A saying attributed to many eminent persons, but Metternich is supposed to be its author. Its significance is, "When my career is closed, I care not what becomes of mankind, or what may be the fate of the world, even if it be destroyed by a deluge."

**AFTER-NOON BUYER.** One who does not buy until after the market-dinner, thereby hoping to buy cheaper than before that time.

**AFTERNOON FARMER.** A farmer late in sowing or harvesting his crops; hence a lazy man.

**AGGRAVATE.** Colloquially this word is used in the sense of to irritate or to provoke, but its true meaning is to add weight to or to intensify. An illness may be aggravated by some additional symptom, or an offence may be aggravated by some additional circumstance.

**AGHA**ST. It was erroneously believed that the word literally signified set a-gazing on any object that astonished and horrified, and so it was spelt agazed.

**AGNOSTIC.** This is formed from the Greek *agnostos* meaning unknown, and it signified a person who does not pretend to know anything except what he has gained by experience. We have become so familiar with this word that we oftentimes forget that this word was suggested by Professor Huxley as recently as 1869, since when it found its way into the English language.

**AGOG.** "Excited with expectation, jiggling with excitement, ready to start in pursuit of an object of desire." It literally means "on the jog," "on the start," coming as it does from *goh*, which is synonymous with jog. "He is all agog" means he is in nervous anxiety.

**AGONY COLUMN (THE).** A joking name given to the column in newspapers set aside for advertisements of missing persons, lost and found property &c. The former are often couched in agonising terms.—*Dictionary of Names, Nicknames and Surnames.*

**AGRARIAN.** Agrarian laws are those which relate to landed property, *agri* meaning a field. Agriculture also comes from "agri."

**AGREED, AGREED.** This Parliamentary cry means that in the opinion of members the matter under discussion can be decided without a division or further debate.

**AISLE.** It comes from the French *aisle* meaning a wing. Hence it means "the side wings of a church, like wings on either side of the higher nave."

**ALARUM.** There are two explanations given of the origin of this word. The one is that it is a corruption of the Norman-French *larum* meaning a thief. The other is that it is derived from the word *all'arme*, meaning to the arms, which comes from the Latin *ad arma*. Although Richardson and Wedgwood approve of the latter derivation, the first explanation seems more feasible, because in the Norman times thieves were so common that it was necessary to have on each estate a larum bell (a thief-bell).

**ALBION.** The ancient name of Britain. Shakespeare uses this word in "Richard II." Now this word is restricted to England only. "Albion perfide" was the name given by Napoleon to Great Britain.

**ALIENIST.** This word as applied to one who is off his head bears connection with the word alienation. To be alienated is to be separated and the phrase "alienation of intellect" was substituted for insanity. Hence an alienist means one who is separated from his intellect. A "mad doctor" is one who attends to cases of insanity and those who invented the phrase "alienation of intellect" go so far as to call such

a physician an "alienist." Needless to say, this word cannot be too strongly condemned.

**ALIGHT, LIGHT (TO).** To light on anything is to come upon it by chance. Hence to alight, Anglo-Saxon *alihtan*, to light on anything, especially on the ground, as alighting from horseback or a carriage.

**ALL.** In plural "all" means belongings, specially, tools, as "to pack up one's alls." In various games the term "all" is used to signify equal, thus, if both parties have scored fifteen points each, they call "fifteen all." "All out," by far, much, as, "he was all out the best of the lot" *i.e.* he was by far the best of the lot. The expression is frequently used by Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy." "To be all out," is to be quite wrong. In racing phraseology, when a person has not had a single winner during the day's racing, he is said "to be all out." As a Stock Exchange term, "all out" signifies that the market improves and that there is better business done. "All-out" means a bumper, carouse. Hence "to drink all out" is to drain a bumper. "All serene" means all right, very good, O.K. (which see). It is an ejaculation of acquiescence equivalent to "yes" or "all right." At one time this phrase was a popular street-cry in London, and was exactly used in the same sense as the modern expressions "right ho," "all right," "yes." For instance, in answer to a verbal invitation to dinner the person invited would say "all serene" meaning, "all right, I'll come." Or, if you ask a friend to meet you in the evening and he says "all serene," he means that he will meet you. "All bones" is said of a very thin and bony person, as "he is all bones." "All round" is a common phrase applied both to persons and things, signifying that they are thoroughly adapted to their purpose, hence, complete and perfect, as "an all round cricketer," "an all round man of business," "an all round gentleman." At billiards "an all round" cannon is a cannon stroke which the player expects by touching the cushions in succession with his ball before striking another. From "all-round" we have the substantive "all-rounder." "All-overish," is an indefinite feeling of apprehension or satisfaction, the idea being that of feeling neither sick nor well, that is, queer. A similar expression is, "all round my hat." "All in all" has three meanings—(a) as an adverb, completely, entirely :—

• "Take him for all in all,  
I shall not look upon his like again."

Ophelia says that of Hamlet; (b) the dearest object of affection, as "She is all in all to me"; (c) of the first importance, all powerful, as "he is all-in-all at his college." "All there" is a phrase extensively used in the sense of

up to the mark, first-rate, clever, possessing quick faculties. A showily-dressed woman is spoken of as "being all there;" and a good player at any game is said "to be all there." A smart, clever officer or a judge is also said "to be all there." An artisan, while expressing the capabilities of a skilful fellow-artisan, would use the expression "he is all there." It can safely be said that the various significations of "all there" as implied in these phrases convey the idea of being in one's element, and a person is always at his best when he is in his element. Sometimes "all there" is varied to "all the way there." "All the way down" (or all the way) is an American expression meaning entirely, the idea being that of from top to bottom. A similar expression is "down to the ground," common to England, as "all the way down" is to America. An American would say "that suits me all the way down," and an Englishman would say, "she suits me down to the ground," i.e. she is just the right sort of girl for me. "All up" is a synonym for "all over," as "it is all up (all over) with him," that is, he is finished, done for. A similar expression is "all to smash" as "he has gone all to smash" i.e. he has met with misfortune and lost his money and credit. It may be observed that plans and anything else may "go all to smash." The expression "gone to pieces" is also used in the same sense. "All to pieces" is used adverbally to signify utterly, excessively, as, "he beat him all to pieces" i.e. he excelled or surpassed him altogether. As a nautical term the crew are said to have "fallen all to pieces," when they are exhausted and the rowing is wild. "All the go" means much in vogue, in demand, the expression being common both to England and America. "All the shoot" means all the party, the whole assembly. "All-same" is pigeon English and is a very common expression for the "same as." The expression "all the same" means notwithstanding, nevertheless. "I feel all round my hat" is a popular expression for "I feel queer," "I do not feel very well," and it should not be confused with the expression "that is all round my hat" which means nonsense. "He was struck all of a heap," means he was stunned, flabbergasted (which see). "All and sundry" means everyone without distinction. "All is quiet on the Potomac." This phrase which means "a period of calm enjoyment and peace" originated during the Civil War. Its frequent repetition in the bulletins and despatches of the War Secretary made it ridiculous to the public. "All gas and gaiters." Charles Dickens uses this phrase in "Nicholas Nickleby." The phrase is applied to anyone whose momentary outlook is so happy that nothing seems to mar it. Gas symbolises loud talk and gaiters smart appearance. "All-standing" means fully-dressed, hence "to turn an all-standing" means to go to bed in one's

clothes. "All sorts of " (American). This expression is used to signify "perfect, complete in every detail, having every quality," as, "all sorts of a horse" is a horse that is not only excellent, but is perfect (possessed of every merit), and "all sorts of a job" is a job which requires all conceivable capabilities and it does not mean an excellent undertaking, as commonly understood. "All sorts and conditions of men." This phrase which has become so common originated with Walter Besant who so styled one of his novels. "All T.H." (tailors). Very good, indeed, of the best, the same as "all there." "All at sea" means in a state of confusion or uncertainty. "On all fours," means exactly, equally. In law the expression "this case is on all fours with that" is very commonly used. "It does not go on all fours" means it does not suit in every particular, or it does not fully satisfy the demand, the allusion being to a quadruped which limps when it does not go on its four legs. "All this for a song!" was the exclamation of Burleigh, when he was ordered by Queen Elizabeth to give £100 to Spenser for a royal gratuity. It should be observed that "for a song" is used in the sense of almost nothing, as "I bought this book for a song," and this sense is conveyed in Burleigh's exclamation, "All this for a song!" "I am for all waters," "I am a Jack of all trades," the allusion being to a fish which can live equally in salt or fresh water. "A maid of all work" is a similar expression, but it is applied to a servant who does all the work of a house, whereas the former is applied to a good all-round man. "All my eye and Betty Martin" means all nonsense, untrue. It is used as an answer of astonishment to an improbable story. The phrase is more than three hundred years old, yet its origin remains uncertain. Various lexicographers make various surmises to suit their own fancy. Some attribute this phrase to the mistake of a sailor who went into a Roman Catholic church where he heard the words "Ah! mihi beate Martine (Ah! Grant me, Blessed Martin)" which he converted into "all my eye and Betty Martin." Another story runs that a constable in giving evidence against a gipsy tribe whom he had up before a magistrate, was very severe on a woman named Betty Martin whom he described as the ringleader. No sooner had he finished giving evidence, than the woman rushed excitedly at him and shouting that all the time what he had been talking was "all my eye," gave him a tremendous blow. From that time wags began to tease him and taunt him with the words "all my eye and Betty Martin." Some philologists suggest that the expression "all my eye" which is more commonly used than "all my eye and Betty Martin" is derived from the Welsh *al mi hiez* meaning it is very tedious i.e. it is all nonsense. "All-fired" is a general

intensive, for instance, "all-fired hurry," "all-fired abuse," "all-fired noise. It is also used as adverb in the sense of unusually, excessively. "All in a pucker" is a common expression for "in confusion," the allusion being to the puckering of the face, when one is perplexed. Common women usually say "I am all in a pucker" as much as to signify that they must have some sort of "pick-me-up" (drink). "All mouth." A man who is a great talker, a chatterbox (which see) is said to be "all mouth." "All get-out." This expression is uttered at a time when any person says something extravagant or incredible. A similar expression is "go on," which is more common than "all get-out." "That beats all get-out" is an expression used for a story which is absolutely incredible. "All men have their price." All men, however honest, can be bought off with a bribe. This phrase is said to have originated with Sir Robert Walpole (1674-1746), in whose time bribery was a political weapon. "All abroad." It means in a state of utter mental perplexity, as, "he is a silly fellow with his mind all abroad."

**ALLEGORY.** It comes from the Greek *allos*, other, and *agoreno*, to speak publicly. So allegory literally signifies a story or discussion in which one thing is described under the image of another. Two masterpieces of allegory are John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and Spenser's "Faerie Queene."

**ALLEVIATE.** It is derived from the Latin *levis* meaning light, coupled with the preposition *ad*, and hence the word literally means weight made light. The meaning of the expression "to alleviate the sufferings of life," therefore, is to lessen them.

This word should not be confused with relieve which comes from the Latin *re*, again, and *levis*, lifting up. To alleviate signifies to mitigate by lightening the burden, and to relieve is to supply what is wanting.

**ALLEY.** This word comes through the old French *aner* from the Latin *adnare*, meaning to go by water. Bailey defines alley as "a walk in a garden." Some etymologists think that "an alley" is different from "a path" in that an alley should be only broad enough for two persons to walk abreast, but the breadth of "a path" is not determined.

**ALLOPATHY.** This word comes from the Greek *allos* meaning other, and *pathos*, meaning feeling, and hence it signifies the reverse of the Homœopathic system, as that word comes from the Greek *homoios*, meaning like, and *pathos*, meaning feeling, and "is intended to indicate the system which professes to cure by drugs which excite symptoms similar to those of the disease."

**ALLOW.** The use of this verb in the sense of "to declare, to intend," is American; e.g. "they all allowed (expressed

opinion) that he behaved in a most shameful manner." At Harrow a boy's weekly allowance of pocket-money is called allow, short for allowance.

**ALLOW, PERMIT.** One is allowed to do a thing, when there is no objection to his doing it, but when he is permitted to do a thing, he is distinctly authorised to do so by those who give him the permission to do it. It may here be noted that to allow is to take for granted when no dispute is desired, whereas to concede is to agree as a matter of favour or out of courtesy.

**ALLUDE.** The frequent use of this word as a synonym for "mention" is regrettable, because "to allude" properly signifies "to hint at or to suggest."

**ALMA MATER.** It means "fostering mother," and a collegian calls his University "alma mater."

**ALMANAC.** Most probably this word is taken from the Arabic language.

**ALMIGHTY DOLLAR.** This is an American expression for power of money *i.e.* Mammon.

**ALMOST.** In Early English this word was used as an adjective, and this has been recently revived. "An almost Christian" is an expression which is more emphatic and neat than "an absolute and unqualified Christian."

**ALOOF.** A nautical term with a slight alteration. To luff a ship means to steer her closer to the wind. When a ship sees a hostile man-of-war going leeward, the former luffs in order to go windward, *i.e.* to go aloof so as not to meet the hostile man-of-war. Therefore a person standing aloof is one who is standing away from others by himself. The word aloofness fell into disuse for some years until it was revived by Coleridge. The word aloof in full should stand "on loof," the "a" being the Anglo-Saxon equivalent to "on."

**ALPHA AND OMEGA.** Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet, and alpha, therefore, denotes one, the first. Omega is the last letter in the Greek alphabet.

**ALTAR.** "To lead to the altar." To marry, as, "the bridegroom led the bride to the altar."

**ALTER.** It comes from the Latin *alterare*, from alter, the other, and hence, to alter literally is to make something other than what it is *i.e.* to change.

**ALTER EGO.** It literally means "my other self." The Sicilian King invested a commission with all the royal powers and prerogatives in trust, and hence "Alter ego" was the formula used in the Chancery of his Kingdom.

**ALTERNATIVE; CHOICE.** It should be strictly observed that an alternative is always a choice between two things; a choice is a choice among a number of things.



**ALTRUISM.** Principally it is the antithesis of egoism (which see). M. Comte the French philosopher was the first to frame the word which Herbert Spencer gladly adopted to express one's appreciation of other people's views and to sympathise with them on the principle of doing unto them as you wish to be done by them.

**AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER.** These words were used by Lord Brougham in one of his anti-slavery speeches, and were put into the mouth of a negro supposed to be appealing to Englishmen for his liberty.

**AMANUENSIS.** This Latin word originated from the habit of a secretary signing the documents which he wrote. A *manu* means from the hand of so-and-so.

**AMATEUR, NOVICE.** These are not synonyms. An amateur may be as skilful as a professional, but the novice is not, because he is only a beginner.

**AMBITION.** It comes from the Latin *ambitio*, meaning going about canvassing. It was the custom among the Roman candidates to go about from place to place to solicit votes before the election came on, and those who did so were ambitious of office. Ambition must be distinguished from avarice. The former is noble, while the latter is mean. It should also be distinguished from "pride," which Milton defines as "that last infirmity of noble mind," and this famous line on pride by Milton is spoiled by making the word "minds."

**AMBUSH.** It is derived from the French *en*, meaning in, and *bois*, meaning a wood.

**AMEN.** This word comes from the Hebrew language in which it signifies strong, trustworthy. At the end of a prayer it literally means "so be it," a full confirmation of what has been already recited.

**AMENABLE.** It comes from the French *amener* meaning to lead unto, and hence it means "easy to be led or ruled."

**AMEND, MEND.** Originally both were the same. Amend is more dignified in its application than mend which is used in relation to trivial matters in life. For instance we say "to amend morals" and "to mend a pencil."

**AMENDE HONORABLE.** It was a mode of punishment in France, before the Norman Conquest, by virtue of which the offender was stripped to his shirt and led into court with a rope tied round his neck. It now figuratively signifies an apology or compensation for wrong done to another.

**AMERICAN MANTAIGUE (THE).** A surname given to Ralph Waldo Emerson, a celebrated American Essayist (1803—1882).

**AMERICAN SOCRATES (THE).** A surname given to Benjamin Franklin, a celebrated American author and statesman (1706—1790).

**AMERICANISMS.** Colloquial words or phrases peculiar to America are termed "Americanisms." Popular Americanisms have been inserted in this book, and their origin or source, as the case may be, has been traced in almost every case, *e.g.*, "I am feast of it"; "the balance of the speech"; "to do a thing about right"; "smart chance"; "you do me proud"; "I have lost the combination"; "horse-editor," &c., &c.

**AMID, AMONG.** Amid denotes lying in the midst of others of different characteristics from oneself; among denotes intermingling with persons who are of the same characteristics as oneself. Thus "I am amid my enemies"; but "I am among my friends."

**AMNESTY.** It comes from the Greek *a*, not, and *mnē*, remember, and hence it means an act of oblivion. It is now used to signify permanent pardon for political offenders.

**AMOUNT, NUMBER.** Amount refers to substances in mass; and number to the individuals of which such mass is made. The amount of noise made by the number of people present at the meeting was something shocking.

**AMOUR-PROPRE.** This French phrase means one's self-esteem or vanity. To wound one's *amour-propre* is to wound one's vanity.

**AMUSE.** This verb means to give one something to muse on, and hence to entertain.

**ANACHRONISM.** It means the reference of an event or custom to wrong date. In Thackeray's novel entitled "Esmond" a book, which was not published until 1750, is referred to in 1712.

**ANARCH.** Milton had a genius for inventing words, and this is one of them. He calls Satan "anarch" meaning "the essential spirit of anarchy."

**ANATHEMA.** It is an ecclesiastical curse. Originally it meant an offering to the God, from the Greek and Roman custom of bringing votive offerings to be set up in the temple, and they were called anathema, from the Greek *ana* meaning up, and *tithēmi* meaning to set. Any offering which the priests refused was called ananathema (*an* being the Greek negative prefix meaning not). An was afterwards dropped, and hence we have the abbreviation anathema.

**ANATOMY.** Anatomy is the human skeleton, and in Shakespeare's "Henry IV." we find atomy for anatomy in the sense of a scarecrow figure, *i.e.* too thin and miserable-looking like a skeleton.

**ANCIENT, ANTIQUATED.** A thing may be ancient without being antiquated. Ancient refers to things that existed in olden times; antiquated refers to things that have gone out of use or have become obsolete.

**ANECDOTE.** Although several little accounts of amusing incidents are published and are called anecdotes, this word, strictly speaking, means a story told in confidence, as it is derived from the Greek *a* (or *an*) meaning not, and *ekdotos* meaning published or given out.

**ANIMAL SPIRITS.** Natural buoyancy. "We speak of one who is spontaneously merry as having 'a great flow of natural spirits.'"

**ANIMUS.** This Latin word means mind. Hence to animadvert literally means to turn the mind to, then, to criticise unfavourably. It is also used in the sense of administering or reprimanding.

**ANNALS.** The word comes from the Latin *annus*, meaning a year. Hence the annals of a country chronicle the events of the years.

**ANNUL, DISANNUL.** Both these words have precisely the same meaning, just as loose and unloose have the same meaning. Dr. Johnson says of disannul, "It ought to be rejected as ungrammatical and barbarous." It is worthy of note that Chaucer uses the word *adnul* in the sense of annul or disannul.

**ANOINT.** "Anointed" is used in a bad sense to express eminent rascality in anyone. "An anointed scoundrel" is one who is as it were the king of scoundrels. "Anointing." A good beating.

**ANON.** Anglo-Saxon on an, meaning in one. Hence anon means in a moment. "Ever and anon" means continuously.

**ANOTHER.** "Another pair of shoes" (colloquial). Quite a different matter, as, "You are going beside the point; that is another pair of shoes."

**ANTE, ANTI.** *Ante* comes from the Latin meaning before, as in antedated cheques, and *anti* comes from the Greek word meaning against or in opposition to. It should be observed that both these words come from the same Sanskrit root *ant*, and *anti* is essentially the same as *ante*. An illustration would elucidate the point. Take the word anticipate. In this word *anti* does not mean to take "in opposition to," but to take beforehand, and the same is the case with the words ancient and antique.

**ANTICIPATE, FORESTALL.** To anticipate merely signifies to expect beforehand. To forestall literally means to buy up goods before they can find their way to the stalls (in the market). Hence figuratively it means to supersede or in other words, to steal a march over.

**ANTIQUE.** This comes from the Latin *ante*, meaning before, and hence the word means before the memory of the oldest man. The word *antic* also comes from the same root, though it is generally used to signify something grotesque or ludicrous.

**ANXIETY, CARE.** Of the two anxiety is the stronger, carry-

ing with it as it does the idea of suspense. Care can be used either in a light or weighty sense. A nurse may lightly take care of a baby, whereas a carpenter takes the greatest care of his implements.

**ANY, EITHER.** Any is used of more than two; either of two only.

**ANYHOW YOU CAN FIX IT.** (American.) Try as you may, as "I am sure you cannot convince me of that, anyhow you can fix it."

**APARTMENTS TO LET.** Said of one who has a somewhat empty head. To same as "upper storey to let," or "a button short" (which see).

**APE.** "To lead apes" or "to lead apes in hell." To be an old maid, and hence to die an old maid. Shakespeare in *Much Ado about Nothing* uses the expression in this sense. The old superstition that unmarried women suffered this punishment after death gave rise to this phrase.

"To play the ape." To imitate like an ape, and hence to play silly tricks.

**APOLLO.** The God of the sun. The presiding deity of archery, prophecy, music and medicine, and president and protector of the muses.

**A POSTERIORI.** This Latin phrase literally means "from the latter," and a *posteriori* argument is proving the cause from the effect. For instance, a bottle of hair-oil argues that there must be a hair-oil maker.

**APQSTLE OF CULTURE (THE).** A surname given to Matthew Arnold, an English poet and critic (1822-1888). His well-known work is "Essay on Criticism."

**APOTHECARY.** "To talk like an apothecary." To talk nonsense. Before 1617 the business of chemist and grocer was combined, and it was in 1815 that the status of an apothecary, as a medical practitioner, was legally held by license. As formerly, apothecary was a term of contempt, hence the expression.

**APPAL.** Some dictionaries derive this word from the Latin *pallere*, to look pale. But it is erroneous, as it comes from the old English word *pall*, meaning to deprive of vitality by age, sudden terror, or the like. Chaucer uses the expression "an old appalled wight" in reference to a man who has lost his vitality and vigour through old age.

**APPARENT, EVIDENT.** "Apparent kindness" is kindness which appears on the surface, and may be true or false; but when this kindness is shown by one's deeds it becomes evident.

**APPARITION.** In its original sense this word did not signify anything supernatural. It simply meant appearance of anything appearing.

**APPEAL.** "Appeal to the country" (An). When any moot question, such as the Irish Home Rule, cannot be settled by the Houses, the Parliament is dissolved in order to obtain the public opinion and have a new election.

"Appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober." Philip of Macedon was rude to a woman who came to him for judgment. "I shall appeal," she said. "To whom?" was the reply. "To Philip sober," she said. Hence the saying.—*T.P.'s Weekly*, 1914.

**APPEAR, SEEM.** "Appear" has a reference to that which is made manifest to the senses, and "seem" to that which is made manifest to the mind. It appears to me that the spring is coming, and it seems to me that there is a traitor in the camp.

**APPEARANCE.** "To keep up appearances." To pretend to be what you are not, by behaving in a seemingly way before others.

**APPENDICITIS.** This is a disease of the appendix, requiring an operation, and it has been humorously said that it has become fashionable in England. Just as an appendix is an addition to a book, so the appendix in the body is an addition.

**APPLE.** "Apple of discord." In Greek mythology Eris, who was the goddess of hate, threw an apple amongst three goddesses with the inscription on it to "the most beautiful," and this led the three goddesses to quarrel over its possession. Hence the expression means something which causes disagreement and strife.

"Apple of the eye." The eye-ball is called apple because of its round shape. The expression means something which one treasures very tenderly, because the eye-ball is the most precious treasure.

"Apple-pie order." This is a colloquial expression, and is used in the sense of extreme neatness and regular order. "Although the origin of the phrase is, more or less, a matter of conjecture, the idea of apples being sliced and methodically arranged for a pie probably suggested it."

"Apple of Sodom." The "apples of Sodom," as described by Josephus, were outwardly fair, but, when bitten, they dissolved in smoke. Hence the expression signifies that which is specious, but disappointing in the end.

**APPRAISE.** This word which was formerly written *apprize*, comes from two Latin words meaning "to set a price to."

**APPRECIATE.** The true meaning of this is to set a just value on. When the price of security on the Stock Exchange is rising, it is said to appreciate; and to appreciate a person's conduct is to appraise it and approve of. Poetically this word means to appraise.

**APRICOT.** The etymological affinity between this word and "precocious" is worthy of note. Both come from the same

Greek word meaning early ripe. The apricot tree flowers at a very early stage, just as a precocious child ripens in intellect before its time.

**APRIL.** From the Latin *aperire*, to open, and April is the opening month, because spring generally begins in this month.

**APRIL, FOOL.** Noah sent out the dove on the first of the month, corresponding to the first of April, before the water had abated and hence the errand which the dove undertook was a fool's errand. It is said that amongst the Jews those who had forgotten to celebrate the day of Noah's delivery from the flood were sent on bootless errand like the luckless dove of Noah. Others refer it to the tricks that are played in India at the Holi festival. Dr. Brewer says, "A better solution is this: 'As March 25th used to be New Year's Day, April 1st was its octave, when its festivities culminated and ended.'" But in my opinion the first explanation is more acceptable.

**A PRIORI.** This Latin phrase literally signifies "from an antecedent." An *a priori* argument is proving the effect from the cause. All mathematical proofs are of the "*a priori*" kind.

**APROPOS.** This French phrase literally means to the purpose, hence, appropriately.

**APT, LIKELY.** Apt is used of things that have a natural fitness or tendency; likely is applied to things which are considered as probable.

**ARAB.** "A street Arab." An uncared-for, unfed and unhoused child is so called.

**ARBITRATOR.** A person appointed by special appointment in a private case. Formerly *arbitrator* was used in the sense in which *arbitrator* is now used, but *arbitrator* is now used in a loftier sense, meaning a sovereign controller. "For Jove is arbiter of both (war and peace) to man." (See Cowper's "Homer's Iliad.")

**ARC.** When it refers to a line which is a part of a circle, it comes from the Latin *arcus*, and when the "arc" is constructed it is called an arch. As an adjective the word arch as in the phrase "an arch girl," it means mischievous, and in that case it comes from the German *arg*, meaning mischievous. But when arch is applied to a bishop, it comes from the Greek *archi*, meaning first or chief. In the expression "arch leader" the word arch has the same derivation.

**ARENA.** Literally it means a sandy place. The Romans gave this name to that part of the Coliseum, where the gladiators fought, which was strewn with red sand so that the spectators might not see the spots of blood shed in the combat.

**AREOPAGUS.** The chief civil court of Athens.

**ARISTOCRACY.** An hereditary form of government, composed of the nobles or superior citizens of a country. It

has for its principle that the best people in the State should form a separate class of their own, and should have a more potent and effective voice and a larger share of political influence than the rest of the citizens. During the eighteenth century and the earlier part of the nineteenth Great Britain had this form of government.

**ARM.** "Arm-in-arm." Walking in a friendly fashion with the arms linked. "In arm."<sup>b</sup> An infant in arms is an infant carried about in arms. "At arm's length." To keep a person at arm's length is to keep him at a distance so as to prevent him from being familiar. "With open arms." To welcome me with open arms is to welcome one heartily. "In open arms." To be in open arms against is to fight against one openly. "Under arms." Soldiers are under arms, when they bear arms in readiness for action. "Up in arms." A person is up in arms, when he is roused to anger and ready to fight.

**ARRANGE.** The verb to arrange, like the word array, was used in a military sense. This word does not appear in the Bible or in Shakespeare, and did not acquire its present meaning until the eighteenth century, when the word arrangement, too, appears in the English language.

**ARRAS.** These were woven stuffs used as hangings for rooms and were so called because they were first made at Arras, in France.

**ARRIVE.** Association, like "alley," may be traced in this word. It comes from the Latin *ad*, to; and *rēpa*, a shore or a bank, and the allusion is to landing from a boat or ship.

**AS.** "As drunk as a lord." Dead drunk. Synonymous: "As drunk as a beggar," "as drunk as a thrush." The proverb "as drunk as a beggar" has fallen into disuse, and "as drunk as a lord" is becoming popular, as the vice of drinking is rather on the increase among the nobility and gentry. "As drunk as a thrush" is a French proverb. "It refers to the alleged habit which the bird has of surfeiting itself on the juice of the grape in the South of France during its temporary sojourn there." "As drunk as a rat" is also sometimes used.

"As false as a Scot." It is probably an anti-Jacobite expression. Ray, in his "Collection of Proverbs" (1737), says:—"I hope that nation generally deserves not such an imputation; and could wish that we Englishmen were less partial to ourselves, and less censorious of our neighbours."

"As fat as a Big Ben." It is said of a person with a big, round belly. Big Ben is the bell of the House of Commons.

"As old as my tongue and a little older than my teeth." This saying is used when a person's age is asked and he does not want to give a definite or direct answer.

"As poor as Job." Job refers to the Biblical character from whom God took all his belongings.

"As soon as a slave sets foot on English territory, he

becomes free." In 1772 a negro, Somerset, fled from his owner and came to England. His master claimed him and when the case was tried in the English Court, Lord Mansfield in delivering judgment in favour of Somerset used these words.

"As far as, so far as." The former expresses distance, as "I travelled as far as Bombay"; the latter expresses one's limitation of knowledge, as "so far as I know."

**ASCETICISM.** This term originally signified the training gone through by the Greeks to harden their bodies. Later on amongst the Stoics it came to mean the controlling and curbing of natural desires and passions.

**ASS.** "A silly ass." A person who says or does anything foolish is so called, often familiarly. A colloquial expression and most popular in England.

"To make an ass of oneself." A person behaving foolishly, or doing something foolish makes an ass of himself.

"To mount the ass." In the sixteenth century it was a common custom to mount a bankrupt on an ass with his face to its tail and march him through the town. Hence the expression means to become bankrupt.

"The ass's bridge." The fifth proposition in the first book of Euclid is so called, because the beginners find it a difficult task to cope with.

**ASSASSIN.** This word has an historical interest, and dates from the Crusades. Assassin which is really a plural, comes from the *hachaschin*, eaters of the drug hashish, who executed the decrees of "the Old Man of the Mountain," who was their chief.

**ASSENT, CONSENT.** To assent to a statement is to admit the truth of it. To consent to a thing is to agree to it after having been opposed to it, though not always.

**ASSERT.** This word should not be confused with aver. To assert conveys the idea of being aggressive, which is clearly shown in the phrase "to assert oneself." To aver a thing is to assert it in a very confident manner.

**ASSEVERATE.** It comes from the Latin *asseverare*, to affirm earnestly; from *severus*, meaning serious or earnest.

**ASSIZE, SIZE.** Size, strictly speaking, is a shortened pronunciation of "assize." "The standard magnitude of an article of commerce was settled by an 'assize' or sitting of some constituted authority. Hence, the standard, or, authorised magnitude of anything was called its assize or size, and afterwards the latter form came to mean magnitude in general." --Henry Bradley, "The Making of English."

**ASSUME.** "Assuming the purple." Among the Romans it signified assuming sovereign power. Purple, being the rarest and most beautiful dye, became the distinguishing



colour of the patricians, and in the time of Julius Cæsar any private person was strictly forbidden to wear it.

**ASSURANCE.** "To make assurance doubly sure." Shakespeare uses this in *Macbeth*, and this phrase has been handed down for all time. It means to make a thing that is already certain so perfectly certain as not to leave any doubt about it.

**ASTONISH.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *stunian* meaning to stun. It has some affinity with the English word astound. Some think that it has some affinity with the Latin word *attonitus* which signifies thunderstruck.

**AT, IN.** "At" is used, if the place is regarded as a point, whether it be a city, town, or village; "in" is used if such point is inclusive, as "I live in Bombay or in India." For instance, "I arrive at Paris" shows that the place is regarded as a point, but "I live in Bombay" shows that such point is inclusive.

**AT LENGTH, AT LAST.** At length is used of space, for instance, "I wrote to him at length," *i.e.*, in detail; at last is used of time, as, "I have come back home at last." At length has a reference to an intermediate state, whereas at last assumes finality.

**AT SIXES AND SEVENS.** In a state of confusion. Familiarly described as higgledy-piggledy. Shakespeare often uses this expression in his plays. Probably it conveys the idea of the unlucky No. 13 ( $6 + 7 = 13$ ).

**ATTACH, ATTACK.** Although now used as two distinct words, originally they were the same, being derived from the Italian *attaccare*, to fasten, to hang; and the idea is to tack or fasten with a nail. In legal language to attach a person is to lay hold of him under a charge of criminality.

**ATTIC SALT.** Refined wit of an intellectual type. Athens, the chief city of Attica, was the centre of art and literature, and hence the term. Salt like smart repartee brings water to the eyes.

**AU CONTRAIRE.** This French phrase means on the contrary.

**AU COURANT.** This French phrase literally means in the current (of events), *i.e.*, acquainted with. "To keep one *au courant* of everything that passes" is to keep oneself quite in touch with the current events of the day.

**AUCTION.** It literally means the act of increasing in any way. The Americans say, "Sales at auction."

**AUDIENCE, SPECTATORS.** Persons assembled to listen to a lecture, debate, &c., are an audience, whereas spectators are eye-witnesses of a pageant, &c.

**AU FAIT.** A French phrase for "thorough master of," or "quite familiar with," as, he is quite *au fait* to the ways of the world.

**AUGEAN STABLE (AN).** A great abuse or a nuisance, or a scandal. The allusion is to the stable kept by King Augus which was occupied by three thousand oxen and which had always been kept in filthy condition until Hercules cleansed it by turning a river through it. Hence "to cleanse an Augean stable" is to remove an evil which seems irremovable.

**AUGHT, OUGHT.** Aught means anything whatever; ought is a corruption of nought meaning a cipher. The word naught is of course not aught *i.e.* not anything (nothing).

**AUGUST.** Augustus Cæsar gave his name to this month, which he regarded as a fortunate month, as it was in this month that he had gained several victories. Before Augustus Cæsar named this month after his name it was known in Rome as Sextilis.

**AUGUSTAN AGE (THE).** It was in the reign of Augustus that Virgil and Horace flourished and carried literature to a transcendent height. Hence it means the period of highest refinement and purity in any national literature. Englishmen often call the reign of Queen Anne as the Augustan age of England.

**AU REVOIR.** This French phrase literally means "until we meet again," and is used in the sense of "good-bye for the present."

**AUTHENTIC, AUTHORITATIVE.** An authentic statement is that which is in accordance with the facts and comes from the source; an authoritative statement is that which comes from the proper authority, and therefore is entitled to acceptance.

**AVERAGE.** Formerly it meant work done for the lord by the avers, or draught-cattle of the tenant.—Wedgwood.

**AVERSE.** Originally the preposition "from" was used for "to" after *averse*.

**AVERSION, ANTIPATHY.** Both these words mean dislike with this difference that while aversion is passive, antipathy is active. Aversion may develop into abhorrence, and antipathy into positive detestation.

**AVOCATION, VOCATION.** An avocation is irregular occupation, whereas a vocation is a regular and main business of life. An avocation is a diversion.

**AVOW, ACKNOWLEDGE, CONFESS.** Each of these three words affirms fact, but in very different circumstances. A man avows motives, opinions, &c.; he acknowledges his mistakes, and confesses his guilt. To confess implies a higher degree of criminality, and "to acknowledge" implies a small degree of delinquency. "Confess" is more spontaneous than "acknowledge." We acknowledge a fault, when we are taxed with it; we confess it without being taxed. "Own" is a common substitute for confess.

**AWARD.** The original sense of this word is shown in its derivation which is French *regarder*, to look. Primarily an award was considering a matter and then pronouncing judgment upon it, but now it means judgment only.

**AWFUL.** This term is often used as a generic intensive, as, "I had an awful time," *i.e.*, I had a very unpleasant time; "we had awful fun," *i.e.*, we had roaring or side-splitting fun. It is also used as a senseless expletive, to intensify a description, as, "what an awful (very) fine fellow." Thus, it will be seen, that this beautiful word is made to serve as fashionable slang in the sense of "very," and it is one of those victimised words in the language which the natives themselves rob of their original beauty and dignity.

**AWK, AWKWARD.** Properly, awkward means left-handed, oblique, perverse. As the left-hand is always associated with the idea of unskilfulness, the word awkward has also come to mean unskilful, and as the left hand also conveys the idea of indirectness, the word "awkward" means "indirect" too, as "to ring the bells awk" is to ring them backwards. Gwak means the left hand, hence gawky means an awkward person. Shakespeare uses the word "awkward" in the sense of adverse, indirect or thwarting in "Henry VI.," in the phrase "Awkward wind."

**AXE TO GRIND (AN).** A personal pecuniary interest in the matter. Franklin tells us that while he was busy at the grindstone in his father's yard, a very pleasant-spoken man came up to him and spoke to him, praising the grindstone. Young Franklin was made to turn the stone while the stranger sharpened the axe he had with him. Young Franklin felt flattered at the stranger's compliments so much so that he kept working till his hands were blistered. Then the stranger sent the boy off with an oath after being satisfied. That man had an axe to grind *i.e.* he had a hidden motive for so behaving.

**AZRAEL.** "The wings of Azrael." This phrase signifies the approach of death. The reference is to Azrael, who is the Messenger of Death.

## B.

**B. & S.** Brandy and Soda. I would rather have tea than a B. & S.

**BACCHANALIAN REVELS.** Entertainments in which merry-making is carried to excess. Bacchus, the god of wine, always celebrated his festivals with excessive revelry and plenty of drinking.

**BACCHUS.** Greek god of wine.

**BACHELOR.** The Latin origin of the word signified a cowherd. The low Latin word *bacca* was a cow, and the young man who

attended them was *baccalarius*. In old French this became a bachelor, meaning a young man, from which we have the English word bachelor in the sense of an unmarried man.

**BACK.** In common parlance "to back" is to support or advocate a cause or matter by money, influence, authority, &c. In this sense "back up" is more commonly used. On the turf "to back" is to bet, and "to back the field" is to bet against all horses except the favourite. "To back out" is to retreat from a difficulty or escape from a dilemma, the opposite expression being "to go ahead." The metaphor is taken from the stables. A "backer" is a better who wagers on horses winning, in contradistinction to a book-maker, who bets against horses, and who is "the layer." "To back" in its commercial sense means to endorse, as "to back a cheque," also "to back a bill," *i.e.*, to become responsible for payment. "Back-handed turn" (Stock Exchange) is an unprofitable bargain. "To take a back seat" is a very common expression employed to signify an obscure position, and it was first used by President Johnson in 1868 in the following saying: "In the work of reconstruction, traitors should take back seats." "Back-door" and "back-stair." (Political.) Both these terms convey the idea of something done in an underhand and secret manner; but it should be noted that we say "back-door counsellor" and "back stairs influence" (or work). Originally and specially both these terms are applied to underhand intrigue at Court, as when "a king is approached secretly by the private stairs of a palace instead of by the state entrance." "Back talk" has various meanings, and one hears it in the expression "no back talk," *i.e.*, speak frankly. It also means a rude answer, an insinuation, contradiction, and withdrawal from a promise. "To get one's back up" (general) is "to get angry," the allusion being to the back of a cat that always arches its back when irritated. "Don't get your back up," "don't lose your shirt," "keep your hair on," "don't get your monkey up," "don't get your wool up," are all synonymous expressions for keeping oneself cool or not losing one's temper. "Back-jump" (thieves) is a back window which appears to a thief as a very suitable means of escape, and hence, the expression. "Back-and-belly" means all over, completely. Hence, "to keep one back-and-belly" is to provide everything, feed and clothe, and "to beat one back-and-belly" means to thrash one thoroughly. "Back-friend" literally is one who holds back in time of need, hence, a secret enemy. "Back-hander" is a blow on the face with the back of the hand. "Back-set" is the same as the modern "set back" meaning a rebuff, an untoward circumstance. As verb it means to check. "Back-track" (American) means eating one's words, and hence, "to take the back-track" is to recede from one's position. "Back-

breaker," originally the foreman of a gang of farm-labourers, and hence, a hard task-master. It is also applied to the task that requires excessive exertion. "Back-breaking" means arduous. "To break the back of a task" is to master it. "Back-slum." In ordinary colloquial English it simply means a "back street" or a "bad neighbourhood." But in Australia this term is used to signify a back room, and also the back entrance to any house, as "we will get into the house on the back-slum," means we will get into the house at the back door. "To make a back" is to stoop down to give another your back to jump over, as in the game of leap-frog. "At the back of." This is taken from following a leader, meaning following close after him. Thousands of people are at his back. It is also used in the sense of being a ringleader as "he is at the back of all this disturbance and disquiet." "To turn one's back upon another," is to leave or forsake him. "To give the back" is also to leave or quit, as, he has given me the back. "Behind my back," literally, when my back was turned, and hence, when I was not present, as, you were cowardly enough to make that accusation behind my back. "Laid on one's back," means laid up with chronic illness, the figure being taken from persons extremely ill, and lying in bed on their back for a considerable time. "To the back" is the same as "to the back-bone," thoroughly.

**BACON.** In slang language it signifies body, as "to save one's bacon" is to escape death or injury.

**BAD.** "Bad egg." This phrase is not used in polite society. A worthless person is so called. "To go to the bad" means to deteriorate in character; be ruined; to become debauched. "He has gone to the bad" is the same as he has sunk into poverty and disgrace. "To the bad" is to show a deficit; to be in debt. "I am ten pounds to the bad," means I owe ten pounds. "Bad lot." The term is taken from auctioneering, and is applied to a person of indifferent character, as "he is a bad lot," a phrase extensively used in England. "Bad man." In America a cruel murderer is so called. "Bad blood," ill-feeling, enmity. "Bad debts," debts not likely to be realised. "To go bad" is to rot, said of meat or food. "Bad form," not in good taste. "A bad shot." In sport a bad shot is that which does not kill the bird shot at. Hence figuratively it means a bad or a wrong guess.

**BADGE.** A badge may be a mark of honour or servitude, as implied in the two derivations ascribed to it. The Anglo-Saxon *brag* and *beak* meant a crown or a bracelet, a sign of honour: and the Latin *baga*, a ring, and *bacca*, the link of a chain, were the marks of servitude.

**BADLY.** Although we generally say "I missed him badly," or "I want money badly," strictly speaking, it is not

correct. "Badly" should not be used for greatly or exceedingly.

**BAG AND BAGGAGE.** These two words are linked together because of their alliteration, although they come from different sources with different meanings. A "bag" used to be a poke, and a small poke is a pocket. "Baggage" we get from the old French *bagues*, which means goods and belongings. Therefore the expression "getting rid of a person bag and baggage" means sending him off with all his goods and belongings.

**BAGATELLE.** It comes from the French *bagatelle*, meaning bauble or trifle. Hence "a mere bagatelle" is anything which is trifling, and can be easily accomplished.

**BAIL.** When a person stands bail for another, he does not know that in so doing he practically takes the place of a nurse who carries a child, because this word bail comes from the Law Latin *baila*, meaning a nurse, through the Latin *bajulus*, meaning the bearer of a child. The word "bail" in cricket, such as wicket-bail, comes from the old French *bailles*, meaning a palisade, or from the Latin *baculus*, meaning a staff.

**BAIT.** This word in all its applications means the same, and comes from the same Anglo-Saxon *bitan*, meaning to bite. The bait on a hook is really a bite for a fish, and the bait on a trap is a bite for the animal by which it is entrapped.

At Winchester College "to be in a bait" is to be angry, the same as "to be in a swot." To bait one is to tease one, especially a young one.

**BAKED.** Half-baked (or soft-baked). Dull-witted; soft; cracked.

**BAKER.** "Baker's dozen." This consists of thirteen. At one time heavy penalties were inflicted on bakers for giving short weight, and this induced them to give one extra bread in twelve. Thus a baker's dozen is used to denote good measure.

"To give a man a baker's dozen" is to give him a good beating or pummelling.

**BALANCE.** The remainder, the rest. "The balance of an account" is a mercantile phrase too obvious to need explanation, and it is well authorised and proper. In America the word is used peculiarly in such phrases as "the balance of a speech," "the balance of the day," and this usage is one that lays itself open to question. It may be pointed out that the word "balance" can hardly justify its use in the language, unless it signifies an exactly equal half.

**BALANCE; REMAINDER.** A balance is an addition or substitution obtained by a book-keeper. A remainder is that

which is obtained by deducting a smaller from a greater sum. If you subtract 3 from 5 it leaves you 2, and that is the remainder, and not the balance.

**BALD AS A BADGER.** This term is applied to a person with a bald head. It is curious why a bald-headed man is called "bald as a badger," as the badger is not bald. The expression is very old, and is used by past authors in their works.

**BALD-FACED STAG.** A person with a bald head is called a bald-faced stag.

**BALK.** The substantive balk, as in the phrase "a balk of timber," and the verb to balk, as in the phrase "to balk a person," are connected with each other, and they both come from the same Anglo-Saxon word *balea*, meaning a beam. In olden times the house was defended against assailants by throwing across a huge beam which protected the door of a log-hut from within. Hence to balk means to hinder.

**BALL.** "To give a ball" is only to give a dance. The word "ball," being the French *ball*, is derived from the Latin *ballare*, to dance. "To ball up." It is slang for "confuse" or "embarrass." "To keep or set the ball rolling." To prevent a thing from flagging. "The three golden balls." The name given to a pawnbroker's shop, in front of which three round yellow balls are hung.

**BALLAD.** Originally it meant a dancing song, and is thus related to "ball."

**BALMY.** Insane; cracked; soft. "He has gone balmy" is a very common expression in England.

**BAMBOOZLE.** To bamboozle a person means to deceive or cheat him. This slang word came into use in 1710, probably from the word "bam," meaning to hoax. Some etymologists think that "bam" is an abbreviated form of "bamboozle," bam being also used as a noun, meaning a deception or a sham. Swift is of opinion that this word was invented by a nobleman in the reign of Charles the Second, but others think it to be an error. It is probable that a nobleman first used it.

**BANANA.** This is supposed to be an African word, but it came into English either through the Spanish or the Portuguese language.

**BANBURY.** "A Banbury-man." Banbury was noted for the zeal of its Puritans; hence a Banbury-man means a Puritan or a bigot. "As thin as Banbury cheese." The Banbury cheese is only about an inch thick, and hence the simile. Shakespeare uses this expression in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. "To take a child to Banbury Cross." To swing the child up and down on one's foot.

**BANG.** As verb, it means to strike with violence, as to bang a door. "To bang a piano" is to play loudly on the piano. "To bang the bush" is to surpass anything that has gone before.

**BANK.** This word is cognate with bench, and the judges and magistrates are called the Bench because formerly they sat upon a bench. The first bench that was ever known to mankind was undoubtedly a grassy bank, and the Anglo-Saxon for bench is *benc* which means a bank of earth. The old money-lenders displayed piles of money of different countries on a bench and this gave the name to their business, the Italian for bench being *banco*. The word banker is the same as *bencher*, which is now applied to a senior barrister.

"The bank." The name by which Bank of England is generally known. "Bank the rag." It means "secure the note." Professors Greenough and Kittridge in their book "Words and Ways in English Speech" say that all the financial senses of bank go back to Italy, the cradle of modern banking.

**BANNS.** When the banns are put up in a Church it means that the notice of an intended marriage is given. The banns are put up for three weeks and if any objection to the coming marriage is to be raised it must be done within that time. It might startle the reader to know that the word banns is the same as ban which means to condemn or to denounce, as they both come from the Anglo-Saxon *ge-baun*, meaning a proclamation. The word ban came to mean to denounce or condemn from the custom of summoning a person to trial.

**BANQUET.** Banquet is a feast given in honour of some big person or event, and is therefore not synonymous with dinner to which one invites one's daily friends.

**BANTER.** The discussion that takes place before a bargain is called a banter or bantering. It is derived from "banter" meaning to make a jest of, or to challenge.

**BANTING.** It is the process of getting rid of superfluous fat by following the dietary prescribed by Dr. Banting after whom it takes its name.

**BAR.** It is an abbreviation of the compound form "debar," and is originally a racing term meaning except, as "I bet against the field bar one" i.e. "I bet on all horses except one." "Barring" is the same as "bar" and they can be interchangeably used. At Oxford University "to bar" is to object to, the same as to debar. "The bar sinister." The sign of illegitimate birth. In an heraldic shield bar sinister is one that is drawn not from left to right, but from right to left i.e. drawn the reverse way, and hence supposed to indicate bastardy. "To bar out." To refuse to admit the teachers of a school—a trick often indulged in by students in England. "To eat for the Bar." Those studying for the bar are required to eat a certain number of dinners at their Inns, and hence, the expression means to prepare oneself to be called to the bar.



**BARBARIAN.** All the Greek and Latin words equivalent to barbarian can be traced back to the Sanskrit *varava*, signifying a foreigner, one who speaks confusedly.

**BARGAIN.** A bargain may be cheap or otherwise, but originally it meant the offer of a foreign article brought from over the water, and hence rare. The word can be traced back to the low Latin *baccaniare* meaning a thing imported in a barque or a merchant-vessel. "A wet bargain." A bargain concluded between two parties over a glass of liquor by way of wishing good luck to each other. "Into the bargain." Literally, besides what was bargained for, hence, extra, besides, in addition thereto. "If he studies the writings, say, of Mr. Herbert Spencer into the bargain, he will be perfect."—*Matthew Arnold*. "To make the best of a bad bargain." To bear bad luck or a bad bargain in the best possible way.

**BARKER.** A man employed to cry at the doors of shops to entice people inside. One finds such men even outside the cinemas in London.

**BARMECIDE'S FEAST.** Name used to signify a tantalising illusion or disappointment, in allusion to the story of "the Barber's Sixth Brother," in "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments." A rich Barmecide gives a dinner, where all the dishes are empty, and makes Shacabae, a starving wretch, pretend to eat what is not before him.—*Dictionary of Names, Nicknames and Surnames*.

**BARN-STORMER.** A strolling play-actor who acts or recites in the public streets is called as such. This term is sometimes applied to stigmatise an actor who is given to bombast.

**BARNEY.** It has several meanings (a) a crowd or a mob, and in this sense it may have something to do with the Hindustani word *bahrna*, to increase, proceed; (b) a generic for deceit, humbug, swindle, especially applied to a contest in which the rules of the game are not too strictly observed, and in this sense it comes from the Yiddish *barnoss* which becomes a Jewish proper name in Barnet. Charles Dickens gives the name Barnet to a young Jew; (c) as a popular term, it signifies a lark, spree, as "let's have a barney"; (d) as a school term it means a bad recitation, and hence, "to barney" is to recite badly.

**BARRACKING.** Persistent hissing and applauding in derision on the part of the spectators. This word is an alteration of the Australian native word *Borak* (banter), and it was introduced during the visit of the Australian cricketers in 1899.

**BARRING CLAUSE (THE).** It is a music-hall term. A clause inserted in the contract between the manager and the artist barring the latter from appearing at rival halls within a specified radius during the term of the contract is said to be the barring clause.

**BASEBALL.** It is an American national game, and resembles cricket games to a certain extent, with this difference that there is too much striking at the wind in baseball. But the English say that baseball is unscientific and incomparably puerile. There is no doubt that this game suits the American temperament, but can never appeal to the British temperament, and would never take the place of cricket in England, although there are many points to admire in baseball, viz. its rapidity, the certainty of the catching, throwing and fielding, and the courage and bravery of the batsman who stands up without gloves or pads to be thrown at.

**BASH.** To bash is to beat or to thrash.

"A woman, a whelp, and a walnut tree,  
The more you bash them, the better they be."

is a popular West-country proverb.

**BASKET.** This is only another form of the ancient British *basg* which comes from *basg*, meaning net-work, and the ancient Britons had a great name for the manufacture of baskets. "To give a basket." To refuse to marry. The reference is to the German custom of fixing a basket on the roof of the person who has been jilted by the woman whom he has been courting. "To be left in the basket." It means to be left in the waste-paper basket, hence, to be thrown over and neglected.

**BASTE.** "I will baste yer" is a common expression amongst the lower classes, and it means I will strike you. Baste is a good old English word derived from the Icelandic *beysta* meaning to strike. "To baste the seams of a dress" is to build up the portions of a dress in order to sew them together, and in this case the verb baste comes from the old French *bastier* meaning to build.

**BAT.** "To carry out one's bat." In cricket a batsman who remains undefeated (not out) to the fall of the last wicket carries out his bat. "Off his own bat." It means on his own account or by his own exertion. In cricket a batsman who scores an individual century is said to score it off his own bat.

**BATED BREATH.** In this expression "bated" is a contraction of "abated." "To speak with bated breath" is to speak not with full-drawn breath due to some suspense or anxiety.

**BATTER.** "To batter" is to beat with successive blows. Hence a battery of guns is a number of guns for the purpose of beating down fortifications, or for other field operations.

**BATTERY.** In law battery is an unlawful beating of another person, whereas assault may be no more than an attempt at battery.

**BEACON.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *beacen* meaning a sign. Many a hill in England is so called because before

the time of the telegraph one watcher used to beckon (sign) to another by kindling a fire on the hill.

**BEANS.** "To know beans." To be wordly wise. The whole phrase is "he knows how many beans go to make up five." "I will give him beans." A very common phrase used in the sense of giving a "licking" or a "hiding" (which see).

**BEAR.** "Bear-leader." A travelling companion to a young man of rank and wealth, employed to look after him with a view to keep him from evil company during his travels. This phrase is taken from the practice of bears being led about with a chain, muzzled, and made to dance on their hind legs to amuse the public. When Dr. Johnson went on tour to Scotland and the Hebrides in company with Boswell, his famous biographer, some wits of Edinburgh called Boswell Johnson's "bear-leader." "Bear fight." In society a bear fight is a sort of a rough-and-tumble in good part, usually occurring at night in smoking- and billiard-rooms in country houses. "To bear one hard." To be unfriendly to. Shakespeare says, "Cæsar doth bear me hard." "To bear out a man." To back a man by supporting him. Do not forget to make that particular statement in your speech to-day, I will bear you out. "To bear in hand." To assist another. (Old chap, bear me a hand in lifting up this huge volume. "To bear down upon." To approach with a deliberate intention. We were all standing at a distance from him, when all of a sudden we saw him bearing down upon us with his eyes fixed in our direction. "To play the bear with." To injure or to damage. Winter plays the bear with flowers. "A bear garden." A disorderly gathering. "Mr. Trollope visited the Chamber while at Paris, and heard Sout and Duplin. He thought it a bear garden." *Temple Bar*, 1887.

**BEARD.** "To beard the lion in his den." To attack a formidable person boldly in his own quarters. "I told him to his beard." I told him to his face all about it fearlessly. "To laugh at one's beard." To try to make fool of one. "To laugh in one's beard." The same as to laugh in one's sleeve (which see) i.e. to oneself without being seen by others. "To run in one's beard." To do something obnoxious to a person under his very nose.

**BEASTLY.** This word which was formerly used only in a very abusive sense, in modern colloquial usage has come to signify "very," and is applied to whatever may offend the taste. It conveys the same idea as is conveyed by "awfully" or "dreadful." We say "what beastly weather"; "I am beastly sorry," "beastly headache," "a beastly dull sermon," &c. In fact everything that does not meet with approval is beastly. But it should be noted that this is the slang use of the word, as the original meaning of the word is "pertaining to, or having the form and nature

of a beast." At Cambridge University a beast is a student who has left school and come up to Cambridge for study, before entering that University: because he is neither man nor boy.

**BEAT.** "To beat the air." To struggle in vain. "That beats the Dutch." That is wonderful or astonishing. "It beats the Dutch how the cat could have got through so small a hole." "To beat hollow." To vanquish completely. "To beat the band." A vulgar phrase to signify "to surpass."

**BEATITUDES.** This word comes from the Latin *beatitudo*, signifying happiness, and the nine sayings of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount which each begin with the word blessed are called beatitudes. Now the word is used in a much wider sense. Any sight that creates happiness and is beautiful to look upon is poetically called a divine beatitude.

**BEAU.** "Beau idéal." This French phrase means highest model of excellence or beauty imaginable. "Beau lion." This French expression denotes one who is a thorough aristocrat and a lion of society. "Beau monde." French for the fashionable world.

**BEAUTY.** "Beauty sleep." The sleep taken before midnight. "If I go to bed late, I shall spoil my beauty sleep." "Beauty and the Beast." A beautiful woman with an ugly male companion. "Beauty is but skin-deep." Beauty is perishable and should not, therefore, be valued too highly.

**BED.** "To make the bed." To arrange the bed and make it fit for use. Formerly beds were made of straws and as straws were always "made" and not "done," the word "make" is still retained in the sense of arranging in due order, in such expressions as "the bed is made" or "the room is made." "As you make your bed so you must lie on it." The same as "As you sow, so shall you reap." "A bed of roses." A situation altogether pleasant and agreeable. "A bed of thorns." A situation of anxiety, unpleasantness and apprehension.

**BEDLAM.** The name Bedlam is a corruption of Bethlehem (a lunatic asylum in London). "It has come to be a synonym for a scene of wild uproar (e.g. a regular Bedlam let loose)."

**BEE.** "To have a bee in one's bonnet." To be half-cracked or half-crazy. The phrase is traced back to a Scotch writer, Gawin Douglas (1474-1521). Anyhow, it is said to be a Scottish phrase, because Scotsmen wear bonnets and Englishmen do not. Nowadays the phrase is quite common in England. "To have your head full of bees." Full of devices, fancies and visionary theories. "In a bee-line." Following a course in a straight line as a bee is supposed

to do. "I am going to get home as soon as I can,—strike a bee-line."—W. D. Howells.

**BEEF.** "Beef-headed." A stupid person. The same as beef-brained." "Beef-witted" for a thick-headed person is a term used by Shakespeare. "Beef-eaters." The warders at the Tower of London are called Beef-eaters. They first appeared in Henry the Seventh's Coronation procession in 1485. Some think that this phrase is a corruption of buffete<sup>r</sup>, one who serves at the buffet. "Beef<sup>r</sup>." This nickname is given to a looking-glass prize-fighter *i.e.* to one who is no good in prize-fighting. "Beefy." Fleshy, unduly thick, commonly said of women's ankles. Any particular run of luck at cards is also referred to as beefy. I have also heard people in England applying this term to a red-faced person.

**BEER.** In old English the word beer was used in the sense of drink, including both wine and ale.

**BEFORE.** "Before the cat can lick her ear." It means never, as a cat can never lick her ear.

**BELDAM.** It literally means "grandmother" and comes from *belle-dame*, used in old French for grandmother. Both Shakespeare and Milton use it in this proper sense, although Shakespeare also uses it to signify "hag," as the word implies. Shakespeare has "old beldam earth" and Milton has "beldam nature" in the original sense.

**BELL.** "To bear the bell." To be victor in a contest. "To bell the cat." To render a common foe harmless of evil at great personal risk. The phrase is taken from a well-known fable. A cat made herself a terror to a certain party of mice one of whom suggested that a bell should be tied round the neck of the cat to give them a warning of her approach. They all agreed to this suggestion, and thereupon an older mouse exclaimed: "But who will bell the cat?"—it being a very venturesome and risky job.

**BELLES-LETTRES.** Also called polite literature. It embraces seven liberal arts, viz., grammar, logic, rhetoric, poetry, music, mathematics, and the learned languages.

**BELOW THE GANGWAY.** The part of the House of Commons where the "independent members" are seated is so called.

**BELT.** "To hit below the belt." To strike another unfairly. In a boxing contest it is not permissible for one to hit his competitor below the waist-belt.

"To hold the belt." To be the champion. In pugilism the belt is presented to the champion.

**BENEDICK.** It is the name of a character in Shakespeare's "Much Ado about Nothing," and is used as Benedict to mean a newly-married man.

**BENT, BIAS.** Bent is a natural inclination or propensity towards a certain thing, and as a rule it is rational. Bias refers more to moral inclination and may be rational or irrational.

**BERTH, BIRTH.** The former comes from the Anglo-Saxon *beran*, to carry and it means a place of accommodation, whether as bed or apartment, or engagement. Birth is simply "coming into existence."

**BEST.** "At best or at the very best." Making every allowance. "Life at best is but a mingled yarn." "At one's best." At the highest point attainable by the person referred to. "For the best." With the best of intentions or motives. "To have the best of an argument." To gain an advantage in an argument. "To make the best of the matter." To put up with ill-luck as best as one could. "Best man." Also called groomsman who is a chosen friend of the bridegroom and who waits on him, as the bridesmaids wait on the bride.

**BET.** "You bet." I assure you.

**BETTER.** "For better or for worse." Indissolubly, in marriage. "To think better of the matter." To consider a matter further. "To be better than one's word." To do more than one promises.

**BETWEEN.** "Between two fires." Subject to a double attack. The reference is to an army fired upon from opposite sides in war. "Between ourselves." Between you and me, hence, in confidence. Sometimes they say "Between you and me and the gate-post."

**BEVY.** A bevy of pheasants or a bevy of ladies means a flock of birds or a group (company) of ladies. Some authorities believe that it comes from the Italian *bera* meaning a drinking, in which case it would mean a drinking party. But Mañu suggests that it is derived from the American *bera* meaning life, in which case it means a collection of living beings. The second seems easy of acceptance.

**BIBLE.** It means books, and it comes from the word *biblia*, a diminutive of *biblos*, signifying the inner bark of the papyrus. Chaucer uses the word bible in the sense of any book in his "Canterbury Tales."

**BICKERING.** This word comes from the English pick and is akin to peck and connected with the Welsh *bikre* meaning to fight.

**BICYCLE.** This word is coined from the Latin *bis* meaning twice, and the Greek *kylos* meaning a circle, and this brings to our mind the two circle-like wheels of the machine.

**BID.** "To bid fair." To promise well. The weather bids fair.

**BIFF.** It is derived from the provincial English *befet* or *buffet* meaning a blow. "To give a biff in the jaw." To strike

ono in the face. The dramatic critic of the *Times* once asked the question "What is the meaning of the word to biff." To biff means to shake.

**BIG.** "To look big" is to assume a lofty manner, and "to talk big" is to talk boastingly. Compare "tall talk." "To get the big bird." In theatrical parlance it means to be hooted or hissed. "Big bugs" in America and Australia are men of importance, aristocrats. A "big-wig" is a person in authority or office. A "big pot" is a person of consequence. "Big house" is the workhouse, a common phrase among the poor. "Big-guns" are men of importance, great people. "Big-head" (American) is used of a person who is eaten up with conceit. This term often refers to the feeling of a swelled head which is the early morning experience after the night's debauch. "Big mouth" (American) is a person given to talking too much (see clack-box). "Big pond" is the name given by the Americans to the Atlantic. "Big take" is said of anything that catches the public fancy, and, hence, becomes a great success. "Big talk" and "big words" mean pompous speech. "Big-side" (Rugby School) is a term for the practice games, especially at football, in which all the bigger fellows in the school join.

**BILBOES.** Shackles. This word is derived from the Spanish Bilbao, famous for its iron and steel.

**BILKING.** Cheating a person of his due. Probably derived from "balking," which in cribbage signifies "spoiling a partner's score." Its chief meaning nowadays is the avoidance of paying cab fares by ordering cabbie to wait outside some hotel or bank, and then leaving by another door.

**BILL, BILLET.** Bill comes from the Latin *bullā*, a seal, and a bill in the sense of writing, as a bill of indictment, a bill of exchange, a bill of parliament, properly signifies a sealed instrument. Billet is a diminutive of bill, and it means a short note, such as that which appoints a soldier his quarters.

**BIRD.** "A bird of passage." One who shifts from place to place. "A jail-bird." A hardened offender, who is more often in prison than out of it. "A bird's-eye view." A cursory view. "A little bird whispered it to me." It is a playful phrase used of something which has been said by someone and repeated by another. A says something to B, and B repeats it to C. C mentioning it to A says "Ah, I know it; a little bird whispered it to me." "To get the bird," or "to get the big bird." It is a music-hall term meaning being hooted and hissed off, as his turn was so awful that he got the bird. "Nice bird." A slang terms for nice girl.

**BISCUIT.** It is a compound of the French words *bis*, twice, and *cuit*, cooked, and hence literally it means twice cooked. A ship's crew were provided with twice-cooked bread so that they might last on long voyages, when they would

have no means of replenishing their stock. On very long voyages they were provided with bread cooked four times.

**BISHOP.** This is derived from the Greek *episkopos*, *epi* signifying upon, and *skopos* is one who watches. Hence a bishop is one who watches over the ecclesiastics who are under him.

**BIT.** "A bit of one's mind." A good scolding. The boy was so naughty that I had to give him a bit of my mind. "Not a bit of it." By no means. "That is rather a sudden pull up, ain't it Sammy?" enquired Mr. Weller. "Not a bit of it," said Sam.—Charles Dickens.

**BITE.** "To bite one's lips." To show signs of disgust. "To bite the dust. To fall in battle. One thousand soldiers bit the dust in the battlefield.

**BLACK.** "Black Christmas makes a fat churchyard (A)." Some say "a green winter makes a fat churchyard." Black Christmas is, of course, a Christmas without snow, and a green winter is a mild winter. Hence the meaning of this proverb is that the death rate is higher if the winter is mild, as mild winter in England anyhow is an unhealthy or unseasonable winter. "Black Hussar of Literature." A surname given to Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) by his biographer and son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart. "The black man." A familiar name given to the devil. "Blackguard." A scoundrel or a low or dirty fellow. In early days this term was applied to the menial servants in a nobleman's household and also to the camp-followers in an army. "The black list." Any person who has offended against the State or any established order of things, is put on the black list. The word "black" signifies disfavour. "Black Maria." It is a prison van which is used to convey prisoners from jails to courts. In Boston there lived a negress of gigantic strength and stature named Maria Lee who always assisted the constables and thus made herself a terror to evil doers, hence the expression. "Black Monday." As a rule, school-boys don't like the Monday on which school re-opens after Sunday, and hence they call it Black-Monday. "Blackleg." One who cheats in a gambling game. Also applied to any rascal or wrongdoer, or to a person who breaks faith with others or stigmatises his name by abusing his occupation. Also those who refuse to join a general strike are called "blacklegs." In this last sense this word is most commonly used. "Blackfellow" (Australian). An aboriginal, a term applied by Englishmen to a native of Australia. "Blackie" (American). An old word for a negro.

**BLANKET.** Authorities give two explanations as to the origin of this word. Some say that this word is derived from the name of the man who made the blanket; while others say that it is derived from the French *blanc* meaning white.



The latter explanation, in my opinion, seems to be more correct, as the word blank too has the same origin. Blank page means a white page. "A wet blanket." A person who discourages others is called a wet blanket.

**BLARNEY.** It means flattery, exaggeration. The term is taken from Blarney, a castle in the County of Cork, and in the wall of this castle is placed a stone which is almost inaccessible. Whoever kissed the stone was supposed to receive the gift of eloquence, especially to win the hearts of women. "None of your blarney" and "he has been to Blarney Castle" are expressions used, when a person is trying his powers of persuasion.

**BLATHERSKITE.** Contemptuously applied to a person who imagines that he is making a great speech, while in reality he is talking utter nonsense. It is probably derived from "blather" (bladder), which, when blown out, throws out nothing but wind.

**BLAZE.** Confining ourselves to the sense of "flame," conveyed by the word "blaze," we can say that it probably comes from the German *blasen*, to blow. But at the same time it is thought more reasonable to ascribe the origin to the German *bläss* meaning pale, of light colour. "A blaze" (German *blasse*) in a horse's forehead is a patch of white, and blazing a tree is "striking off a slice of bark as a mark, leaving, of course, a light patch where the bark was removed."

**BLAZES.** A low equivalent for the nether regions or hell. "Go to the blazes" is a common expression.

**BLEAK.** In itself the word conveys the sense of making the complexion pale, being the effect of cold, and hence it is used in the secondary sense of cold, as "a bleak winter."

**BLEAR.** "To blear one's eyes" is to deceive one and in this sense it is identical with blur, a spot or smear, and is in no way connected with "blear" in the sense of being influenced. Blear-eyed means having inflamed eyes, being the effect of weeping.

**BLESS.** The origin of this religious word carries us back into the prehistoric past. Bless is derived from blood, and its original meaning was "to mark or consecrate with blood," which clearly shows that with the primitive races the shedding of human blood was for ritual purposes.

**BLIGHT.** The Concise Oxford Dictionary says that the etymology of this word is doubtful. It is probable that it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *blaec*, livid, pale, and, hence, a disease affecting corn or trees that makes them look, as if they were blasted (pale).

**BLIND.** It means deprived of sight, and hence, figuratively, it is used to signify anything which does not fulfil its purpose. A blind entry in a book is one which leads to

nothing. When you try to put a person off something which he intends to do by bluffing him, you are said to give him a blind.

**BLINK.** A blink is a wink, a glance, a gleam, &c., and as one blinks under a strong dazzling light, the word blink is connected with blind and is sometimes used for absence of vision. This signification is evident in the phrase "to blink a question" which means to shut one's eyes to it. Blinkers are the leather-plates put before a horse's eyes to prevent his seeing.

**BLOATER.** "My bloater" is a popular expression of friendship. Just as one likes bloater (a kind of fish) for his breakfast, so one calls a dear friend of his as "my bloater."

**BLOOD.** "Blood is thicker than water." This is an old English proverb, and the idea conveyed is that water being of an evaporating nature does not leave any trace of its having been spilled, whereas a drop of blood does and endures.

**BLOODY.** It is a corruption of "by my Lady." It was a common expression when England was Roman Catholic.

**BLOW.** "Blowing your own trumpet." Sounding one's own praise or giving one's self a testimonial. Old custom of heralds announcing by blowing trumpets the names and ranks of knights.

**BLUE.** The word enters into various phrases with various designations. (a) It conveys the idea of feeling surprised, confounded, annoyed, disappointed, as in the phrases "to look blue," "to have a fit of the blues" in which the allusion is to the livid hue of the face, when a person is gaping with astonishment at some news or act arousing his indignation. (b) It denotes extremes, as in the phrase "to drink till all is blue," allusion being to the blue sky or atmosphere which seems to gather round the victim who sees a luminous point coming directly at him. (c) Blue is said of talk that is immodest, smutty or indecent, in contradistinction to "brown talk" which is serious and decent talk. (d) "True-blue" (political) means faithful, genuine, real, in allusion to blue being the colour of fidelity and constancy. (e) At Oxford and Cambridge a man is said "to get his blue" when he represents his university against the rival university in inter-university sports such as the annual boat-race, and cricket match. The Oxford colour is dark blue, and the Cambridge light blue. (f) "Blue" is a policeman, from the colour of his uniform; and it is also short for Blue-stockings, a term contemptuously applied to a woman of literary tastes. "Blue-stockings" is a synonym for learned woman. There used to be a literary club in London consisting mostly of women, and at this club a male guest once wore blue stockings. So the coterie

was contemptuously called "the blue-stocking club." As verb 'blue' means to blush. "Blue books." This term is applied to the authentic Government books, being the records of all the affairs pertaining to the Government. They are printed for the special use of the members of the Houses of Parliament. They are bound in blue covers, and hence they are so called.

**BLUFF.** It has three significations (a) to oppose or put down by cheek or effrontery, as "I am not going to be bluffed by you"; (b) an excuse or pretence, that which is intended to hoodwink or blind; and (c) in game of cards at poker betting high on poor cards is called "bluffing." In brag too this term is commonly used.

**BLUNDERBUSS.** Originally it signifies a person who does his work in a boisterous manner. Hence it is applied to a wide-mouthed noisy kind of gun.

**BLUNT.** The word blunt conveys the idea of doing things suddenly without preparation. Thus, "to blunt a thing out" is to bring it suddenly out, and "a blunt manner" is an abrupt manner which is always unpolished. The word blunt in the sense of dull-edged is applied both to persons and things, as a blunt person and a blunt knife.

**BLURT.** "To blurt out." Shakespeare uses it in the sense of "to speak from impulse, and without reflection."

**BOARD WAGES.** When the servants are not fed in their masters' houses they get higher wages, which are called board wages, because in that case they have to provide food for themselves.

**BOB.** Slang for a shilling. This slang is attributed to Sir Robert Walpole.

**BOBBY.** Policeman. It takes its origin from Sir Robert Peel, who first introduced the police system in England. Bobby is the pet name for Robert.

**BODLEIAN LIBRARY.** The well-known library of Oxford University, originally established in 1445, and re-established by Sir Thomas Bodley (1545-1613).

**BODY POLITIC (THE).** A collective body of a nation which exercises political functions.

**BOHEMIAN.** A free, easy-going person, who dispenses with formalities and modes of etiquette. It originates from the gypsies who were supposed to have come from Bohemia.

**BOLSTER.** A bolster is a pillow or cushion which is stuffed, and hence, figuratively, it implies the supporting or maintaining of a worthless cause or object, as "he bolstered up his pretensions with lies." In this sense it is always followed by "up."

**BOLT FROM THE BLUE (A).** A disaster that comes too suddenly. In mythology, Jupiter, the god of thunder, hurled revengeful bolts from heaven.

**BONFIRE.** A display of fireworks on occasions of private or public rejoicings. It is so called from the beacon fires which were at one time in use to raise an alarm over a wide extent of country.

**BOOBY TRAP.** A practical joke of a stupid nature, which on better thought might have been left alone. The word "booby" is the name of a bird whose chief characteristic is its stupidity.

**BOOKMAKER.** A professional betting-man is so called. There are two parties in betting, one is called layers (the book-makers), and the other backers, which include owners of horses as well as the public.

**BOOM.** "To boom" literally is to sound loud like a gun, and hence, to boom a book is to bring it to the public notice by loud reports in a newspaper. (See *crick up*.)

**BOOST.** "To boost" is to assist. It is also used as a noun, as he gave me a boost in business.

**BOOZE.** As noun it means "drink" and as verb "to drink," always conveying the idea of drinking heavily, as the word is derived from "house," to drink deep, or to carouse. It is the same as "to lush" (which see). Boozy means intoxicated or fuddled, and a boozier is a drunkard.

**BORN.** "Born in the purple." Children of royal birth are said to be so born. It originates from a Greek word *purphyry* which means purple. "Born within the sound of Bow Bells." A true London Cockney. "Bow Bells" indicate a chime of bells in Bow Church, a very famous Church in London.

**BOSH.** It means nonsense, rubbish, rot, and is used as noun for nonsense, as verb for "to humbug," and also as interjection equivalent to "it's all my eye." This word is taken into English bodily from the Turkish *bosh* meaning empty, vain, useless.

**BOSS.** This term is extensively used in England by all classes with the meaning of master, head, governor. In America and Australia, too, it is in common use with this difference that in Australia it is considered disrespectful to speak of the head as "the boss" unless he happens to be of the same social status as his subordinates. In America it is also used as an adjective in the sense of large, fine, chief, as "a boss lot of apples." As verb, it means to manage, control, direct. "To boss anything" is to make a mess of it *i.e.* to spoil it, and "the boss of the show" is the chief man who runs the show. Philologists differ as to the origin of this term, but, in all probability, it is derived from the Dutch *baas*, master.

**BOTTOMLESS.** "The bottomless Pit." A humorous nickname given to William Pitt, a celebrated English statesman (1759-1806) in allusion to his thinness. He is also called

the "Heaven-sent Minister" and the "pilot that weathered" the storm." The storm referred to was the general disturbance in Europe caused by Napoleon during the time of Pitt's Ministry.

**BOUGH.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *būgan*, to bend or to bow, and hence it means a branch (which bends) of a tree.

**BOUNDER.** One with bouncing manners or one who is bumptious. "He is a thorough bounder" is an expression commonly used in England. "Lazy bounder." One who is good-for-nothing and indulges in tall talk.

**BOUNTIFUL, PLENTIFUL.** Originally bountiful meant generous in bestowing gifts, but now it is used as a synonym for plentiful meaning yielding in plenty.

**BOURNE.** Bourne does not mean land or country as some suppose it does. Shakespeare in *Hamlet* says:—"Undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns," and here bourne really means limit or boundary. It comes from the French *borne*, bourne (Latin *bodina*, limit), meaning literally that which marks the end.

**BOWL.** "Bowled out" (thieves). Thieves use this word in the sense of convicted. It is derived from the game of cricket in which a batsman when bowled out finishes his innings. "Bowled over" (colloquial). To overcome an opponent either in an argument or in a contest.

**BOXING DAY.** The day following Christmas. Although it used to be the custom of carrying round parish boxes for the poor after Christmas, it has now become customary for Christmas boxes to be paid before that date.

**BOYCOTT.** To boycott a person means to victimise him so far as to prevent him from having any dealings with others or from having access to society. Captain Boycot, an Irish landlord was the first victim to be so handled.

**BRACE.** The different meanings of the word "brace" may all be reduced to the idea of straining, compressing, confining, binding together, from a root *brak*, which has many representatives in the other European languages. To brace is to draw together, whence a bracing air, one which draws up the springs of life; a pair of braces, the bands which hold up the trousers. A brace on board a ship. Its *brace*, is a rope holding up a weight or resisting a strain. A brace is also a pair of things united together in the first instance by a physical tie, and then merely in our mode of considering them. From the same root are bracket, breeches, etc.—Wedgwood—*Dictionary of English Etymology*. "Brace of ducks" (cricket). A batsman who fails to score in either innings does not break his duck and therefore gets a brace of ducks, in other words, he does not score a single run. "Brace o' shakes." In a few minutes, as, I shall see you again in a brace of shakes.

**BRAG.** To brag literally means to draw another's attention by making a noise, by boasting, or by showy dress. Hence to brag is to boast.

**BRAND-NEW.** From the blacksmith's art we get this word which is often corrupted into bran-new. Shakespeare uses the expression "fire-new" in the same sense in which we use "brand-new." "You should then have accosted her: and with some excellent jests, fire-new from the mint you should have banged the youth into dumbness."—Shakespeare—"Twelfth Night."

**BRASS.** Cheek; saucy or impertinence. "He is a man of brass" means he is an impertinent or cheeky fellow. "He offered me plenty of brass" *i.e.* he was very rude to me. "Oh, I like your brass" *i.e.* I like your cheek.

**BRAT.** It literally means a rag and is contemptuously applied to a little child. Words signifying rag in different languages are contemptuously applied to women.

**BRAWL.** This word has two meanings (*a*) a kind of dance and (*b*) a dispute or quarrel. It is also employed to signify the noise of broken water, as a brawling brook.

**BREAD.** "Bread and butter letters." Letters in which the guest expresses to his hostess the pleasure he has derived from his visit.

**BREAK.** "Break one's back." Figuratively means to turn bankrupt. "Breaking the bank." When a card-player has consistent run of luck and there is no more money left to pay out to him, the table gives up playing, and this is called "breaking the bank." "To break ground." To commence operations; to take the first step in any undertaking. It is only a metaphor derived from the profession of building. "To break in." To interrupt a speaker by making a remark. "To break off with." To give up the acquaintance. "To break up." To come near being dissolved, as the meeting was about to break up. "To break with." (*a*) To announce news to. It is now obsolete. Shakespeare says "Let us not break with him." (*b*) To quarrel with, as, "So far as I can see, I don't think that I have given you any cause to break with me." "To break the news." To impart startling news gently.

**BREAST.** It is alked to the English word burst, and originally it signified a swelling or a protuberance. Hence a man's chest, and a woman's breast.

**BRED AND BORN.** The proper sequence of words should be "born and bred" because one is born before one is bred. "He is a gentleman born and bred" means he is a gentleman by birth and training.

**BRIBE.** The French *bribe* means broken victuals, as *bribe de pain i.e.* a lump of bread. The literal signification is still

retained in the metaphorical use of the word. A bribe literally is a sop to stop one's mouth, and hence, a gift given with the object of obtaining another's compliance.

**BRIC-A-BRAC.** The French origin is doubtful. The word signifies a collection of articles which have the interest of variety and antiquity attached to them.

**BRICK.** It is a colloquial term applied to a staunch, loyal, spirited, honest, or jolly good fellow. It is sometimes used with an adjective prefixed, as, "he is a regular brick," or "he is an out-and-out brick." The word "brick" conveys the idea of enduring hardship and also of staunchness in friendship. Two suggestions as to the figurative sense of the word have been made. The one is that it is in allusion to the shape of a brick which is square, and squareness is synonymous with straightforwardness, as "he answered you as square as a brick." The other is that it is of University origin, the simile being drawn from the Classics.

**BRIDE OF THE SEA.** A poetical surname given to Venice.

**BRIDLE ONE'S TONGUE (TO).** This figure of speech means to gag the mouth *i.e.* to put a check upon one's tongue. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was the practice to gag the tongue of a convicted shrew, and it is probable that this practice gave rise to the metaphor.

**BRIEF, CONCISE.** Brief means short, and a barrister's brief is a short statement of facts upon which he bases his argument while pleading. Concise originally means cut, and a concise style is one which the writer has taken great care to make brief (short) by cutting out the redundancies.

**BRING, FETCH.** Bring denotes moving towards some person or place; fetch denotes moving from one place to another and coming back to the original place. Carry denotes moving away from. I shall bring you the book you asked me to fetch, but it will be such a job to carry it, being so heavy.

**BRISK.** This word is used in the sense of sharp, lively, quick, &c., as brisk wine *i.e.* wine of a sharp, smart taste, and a "brisk walk" meaning a sharp, quick walk. Fruits that are sour to taste are also called brisk fruits, the Italian word being *brusco*, meaning brisk in taste. The French words *vin brusque* mean wine of a smart taste.

**BRITON.** Native of Great Britain or the British Empire. "Our primitive ancestors distinguished themselves, in pride or simplicity, as Brith and Brithon; Brith signifying stained, and Brithon, a stained man. The predilection for colouring their bodies induced the civilised Romans to designate the people who were driven to the Caledonian Forests, as picts, or a painted people."—D'Israeli.

**BROACH, BROOCH.** To broach a cask is to pierce it in order to draw off the liquor, and hence, the metaphorical

signification of the word is to begin, as to broach a subject. One does not often hear of "broaching a business," but the expression can be correctly used. A brooch is a part of a lady's toilet and it is a kind of an ornamented pin to hold the part of dress together.

**BROAD ARROW (THE).** "The official mark of the British Government, which is stamped, cut or fixed upon Government property, such as guns, soldiers' clothing, ordnance &c., to prevent embezzlement. Its use by private persons is forbidden by law." In India too the stationery &c. used in Government offices has this mark.

**BROKE TO THE WIDE.** Hark! up, the same as "stony-broke" (which see). At first the expression was "I am broke to the world," and the world suggesting the wide world, the latter word was dropped. It may be noted that the expression "stony-broke" is more common in use in England than the expression "Broke to the wide."

**BROTHER JONATHAN.** A nickname for the American people. 'It is said to be derived from Jonathan Turnbull, an American magistrate (1710-1785).

**BROWN.** Probably it comes from the German *brennen*, to burn, and hence, brown literally means the colour of things burnt. "Brown talk." Reverie. It is also slang for very proper conversation. "Brown salve." An exclamation denoting surprise and at the same time meaning "I understand what you say."

**BUB.** (Thieves.) Drink.

**BUBBER.** (American.) Any woman (young or old) with full breasts.

**BUBS.** A woman's breasts.

**BUCK.** As noun, it is now an obsolete word meaning "swell," "maccaferoni" or "Bond Street lounge" as they call it. It has now been superseded by "dandy," "swell," or "blood." As verb, it means to jump like a buck. While once riding in an omnibus with a friend of mine I remarked "This 'bus jerks too much," whereupon he said "You mean it bucks and bumps." (Anglo-Indian.) It is derived from the Hindustani word *bakna*, to bark like a dog. It has come to mean "to boast" or "to talk egotistically." "Buck down." (Winchester College.) Very seldom used, but it means "to be unhappy." Buck up." This expression, which is now commonly used in the sense of "cheer up," or "be glad" originated at Winchester College.

**BUCKLE.** A London costermonger often uses the expression "I'll make him buckle under" with the meaning of "I'll make him yield," as in a fight or contest, and Shakespeare uses the word "buckle" in this sense in his "Henry IV."

**BUCKRAM.** A coarse cloth stiffened with dressing. It is derived from the old French *boqueran* meaning goat-skin,



and this takes us back to the days when leather suits were commonly worn.

**BUDGET.** This is derived from the Latin *bulga* meaning a bag, coming from the French *bouge*, and its diminutive *bougette*, meaning a pouch. The budget formerly was a sack full of money, the various sums intended to be devoted to specific purposes being sorted into little bags. In parliamentary language, to open the budget, is to lay before the legislative assembly a statement of the finances and ways and means of the Kingdom, which is done annually by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, comprehending a general view of the National Debt, income and expenditure, the proposed plan of taxation for the ensuing year, remission of imports, and a general view of the actual income and expenditure of the by-gone year.

**BUG.** Until the seventeenth century was well advanced, the bug appears to have been a rare insect in this country, and it seems to have taken its name from the terror caused by it when it did invade us. The word originally meant a ghost or "bogy," and so any awe-inspiring thing. "Thou shalt not need to be afayed for any bugge by nyght, nor for the arrow that flyeth by day," is a sixteenth-century Bible version of Psalm XCII., 5 and in the third part of "King Henry VI.," King Edward says "Warwick was a bug that feared us all."—*The Daily Chronicle* dated the 12th May, 1914.

**BUILD.** Slangily used for the cut or make of dress &c. "It is a tidy build, who made it?"

**BUILDING, CONSTRUCTION.** These two should not be used in the same sense. Instead of construction, "constructing" ought to be used in the sense of "building."

**BULLETIN.** A short authoritative announcement; the word being derived from "bull, an edict issued by the Pope."

**BULLY.** A braggart. It used to be a term of endearment, connected with German *buble* meaning lover. Shakespeare uses this word in the sense of "A fine fellow, jolly comrade" in "Merry Wives of Windsor" and in "Midsummer Night's Dream."

**BULWARK.** Originally it signified defence made of the holes or trunks of trees, and hence, a work of defence, a rampart. The French word meant the ramparts of a town originally, then, the roads and walks on the inside of the ramparts, and now it is applied to any wide street or walk encircling a town.

**BUM.** A vulgar term for a loafer or an idle worthless fellow. The use of this word should be avoided.

**BUMBLEDOM.** This expression describes pompous self-importance, and has its origin from Bumble, the fat and officious beadle in Charles Dickens's "Oliver Twist."

**BUMPER.** From French *Bon-perc*, an old-time toast in monastic life, now used for "full measure." A match in which one side does all the scoring is called "a bumper game."

**BUMPKIN.** Probably this word comes from bump, signifying one who does things abruptly or in a thumping manner. Hence the word means a clumsy, clownish fellow.

**BUNKUM.** Humbug. Member for Buncombe in N. Carolina spoke needlessly in Congress to impress his constituents, and hence the expression. "It is all bunkum," "I don't believe in bunkum of that kind" are expressions daily used in England.

**BURDEN.** The word "burden" in the burden of a song is not connected with the word burden, a load, which is related to the verb to bear. "Burden" in the burden of a song comes from the French *bourdon*, the humming or buzzing of bees. The word is sometimes spelt "burthen" in poetry.

**BUREAU.** The original designation of the word was the colour of a brown sheep, and then it came to be applied to the woollen cloth made from the fleeces of such sheep in its undyed state. As the table in a court was covered with such cloth, the word came to denote the table or the court itself, and so in modern French the word is used for an office where any kind of business is carried on. In English it was used in the sense of a writing-table, and from that its transition to a cabinet containing such a writing-table is not at all difficult to imagine.

**BURGLAR.** A burglar is a man who breaks in between nine o'clock in the evening and six in the morning. But if he breaks in any other time he is a housebreaker.

**BURKE.** "To burke" means to smother; to stifle; to pass over in silence. From the notorious Irish murderer Burke who always suffocated his victim in order that the bodies might show no marks of violence. He was executed in 1829. "His book was burked by the critics" means his book was passed over by the critics without notice. "To burke the question" is to stifle discussion by waiving the question aside.

**BURN.** "To burn the candle at both ends." To expend one's energies in two directions. "A burnt child dreads the fire." One who has suffered becomes wary or cautious. "To burn one's fingers." To meddle with something which is not within one's sphere, and consequently to suffer loss. "Money burns hole in pocket." It clamours to be spent. "Burning one's boats." Starting a risky enterprise and going headlong at all costs when it is too late to draw back.

**BURROW, BARROW.** Burrow comes from the Anglo-Saxon *beorgan*, meaning to protect or shelter, and hence, it means a place of shelter or defence, as a rabbit burrow (the hole

which rabbits dig for their protection). It is also used in the sense of shelter from the wind, as "a very burrow place for cattle." A barrow is a light, small carriage moved or carried by hand, but when it has a wheel, it is called a wheel-barrow. The word barrow is allied to the English word to bear meaning to carry.

**BURY THE HATCHET.** End a quarrel and make peace. The North American Indians bury the hatchet, their symbol of war, in the presence of opposing tribes to show that the quarrel is at an end.

**BUSINESS.** "To go about one's business." To go off. "I sent him about his business" means I did not like his intrusion, and so dismissed him. "A man of business." (a) A shrewd man with great ability for managing a concern and (b) a legal adviser. "To mean business." To have serious intentions. When a man pays serious attention to a woman, he means business *i.e.* he means proposal of marriage.

**BUSTER.** Literally it means more than the usual size. "What a buster" means what an extra large one. "He is in for a buster" means he is bent on plenty of fun and frolic.

**BUTT IN (TO).** Although somewhat vulgar, this phrase is expressive, meaning as it does to interfere in an inquisitive manner.

**BUTTER.** "To butter both sides of one's bread." To gain advantages from two parties at the same time. "To know on which side one's bread is buttered." To be fully alive to one's own interests. "To look as if butter would not melt in one's mouth." To look harmless and innocent.

**BUTTERFLY.** Very volatile; not at all stable, as, "she is a butterfly." "Butter-fingered." So weak-fingered as to let things slip and fall. When a fieldsman lets the ball slip through his hands, the spectators shout jeeringly "butter-fingers."

**BUTTON.** "He is a button short." He is half-silly. "To button-hole a person." To worry one with conversation that one does not want or care for. This phrase is due to the custom, no longer practised, of holding a person by the button or button-hole while talking to him. "Buttons" (or boy in buttons). A page, from the gilt buttons which adorn his jacket. "Dash my buttons." A mild oath. "Not to have all one's buttons." To be deficient in intellect. Similar expression is "to have a bee in one's bonnet" (which see). "To make buttons." To look sorry or sad.

**BUTTON.** This comes from the French *bouton*, a button, bud, any small projection or anything thrust or pushed forward, and, hence, at one time the English name for pimples was pushes.

**BUXOM.** Although this word is used in the sense of "fat and genial," as "a buxom landlady," it originally means pliant, flexible, obliging. Buxom is never applied to a man, and this may be accounted for by the fact that men who pride themselves upon being lords of creation would never sanction the application of this word to themselves, as they could never bear the idea of being made "pliable" by their wives. Thus it will be seen that this word in its original sense was more or less used in reference to domestic intercourse.

**BUY.** "To buy off a person." To give money to a person which would induce him to cease from opposing you. "To buy the refusal of anything." When a person gives money for the right of buying a thing at any future time for a fixed price, he is said to buy the refusal of that thing. "To buy a thing for a song." To buy it so cheaply as to buy it for next to nothing. "To buy the rabbit." To look for trouble. The old-fashioned meaning of the word rabbit is curse or bother.

**BY, WITH.** "By" expresses a remote connection, whereas "with" expresses an immediate and close connection. Moreover "by," as a rule, refers to the agent, and "with" to the instrument, i.e. "by" is used before a noun denoting the agent, and "with" before a noun denoting the instrument, as "A was killed with a stone by B." There occurs a passage in Dr. Robertson's "History of England" in which he says that while one of the old Scotch Kings was making an inquiry into the tenure by which his nobles held their land, they started up, and drawing their swords, exclaimed "By these we acquired our lands and with these we will defend them." The above passage clearly explains the distinction in the use of these two particles. "By hook or by crook." It means by one means or another, being a reference to a shepherd cutting a hook from the hedge to secure a stray sheep, when he does not happen to have his crook with him. So old is this expression that we find it in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. "By-and-large" (Nautical). When a ship sails well "by and large" it means that it sails well on wind and off wind. In like manner to discuss a subject "by-and-large" means to discuss it in all its bearings. "By Jiminy" (American). An exclamation of surprise. The same as "by Jove," or "by the great tinker." "By this." When this took place. "By this, John had his hand on the shutters." —R. L. Stevenson. "By-and-by." After a time. I will see you by-and-by. "By-the-bye." When a person introduces a new subject which his hearers are not prepared for, he uses this phrase.

**BY-LAW.** This is often erroneously written as "bye-law." "By" means a village, a city or a borough, whereas "bye" means fear.

## C.

**CWT.** This represents a hundredweight, C, being the Roman numeral letter for one hundred, and wt being an abbreviation of the word weight.

**CAB.** It is an abbreviation of the French word *cabriolet*, meaning a leap, and the carriage took its name from its lightness and easy running. In a letter to his sister, Macaulay says that he "called a cabriolet," and only two months later he says that he "called a cab." This shows that the word soon became shortened.

**CABAL.** In the political sense it means an intriguing clique. It had its origin in the reign of Charles the Second from Committee for Foreign Affairs, five members of which were Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale. These five names made the acrostic cabal.

**CABINET.** This is French for a little room, being the diminutive of *cabane*, a hut which sense is retained in the word "cabin." When a king wanted to confer with certain of his Ministers, he took them into his private room. Although the present Cabinet in England is a committee of the Privy Council, it is in reality a body of the leading Ministers belonging to the party in power. This is due to the modern democratic government, and it has been so ever since democracy made headway.

**CABLE.** It comes from the Latin *capere*, to hold, and *caplum*, a halting, and it literally means that which lies or holds anything. A ship's cable is a thick rope, and this word is also used as a nautical measure. The wire cable (rope) used for submarine telegraphs gave rise to the verb "to cable" to signify to transmit by submarine telegraph and a "cablegram" is a message sent by that means. This word "cablegram" is a somewhat odd mixture of English and Greek.

**CAD.** This slang term is probably derived from "cadet," meaning a younger son, supposed to be a contraction of *cadet*. But almost all the slang dictionaries say that it is a shortened form of cadger, a beggar or a mean fellow. The first origin seems more feasible, because the younger sons of the nobility (cadets) were looked down upon by their elder brothers who were richer. Hence when we say contemptuously "he is only a cad," we no doubt mean that he is a low, contemptible fellow, not fit for society, but strictly speaking it means that he is only a cadet, having no property and hence not worthy of notice. During the first days of the omnibus the conductor was always known as "the cad" and in Dickens's earlier works this word appears in that sense.

**CADDIE (GOLF).** A boy who carries clubs for golfers. The Scotch word *cadie* or *cardie* means an errand-boy or a serving-man.

**CADET.** A cadet is a student in a military academy, but formerly it meant a volunteer in the army which he joined in the hope of gaining an officer's commission in time. It comes from the French *cadet* meaning younger brother or junior member of the family.

**CADGER.** In falconry a cadge was a wooden frame on which the hawks were taken to the field and the cadger was the man who carried it. Owing to the low nature of the work he had to do, "cadger" came to mean "low fellow."

**CAESAR.** "Caesar's wife should be above suspicion." Caesar divorced his wife on suspicion, and when remonstrated with by his friends for putting away his wife on a mere suspicion, he replied that it did not matter for Caesar, but Caesar's wife should be above suspicion in morality. This phrase is now generally used to signify the necessity of being flawless and above suspicion on the part of those who are directly connected with great personages.

**CAITIFF.** It is derived from the Latin *captivus*, meaning a captive, from *capere*, to take. So literally it means a captive or a prisoner. But this word degenerated before the time of Shakespeare who uses it in the sense of a low, despicable fellow in his *Othello*, in which he calls Cassio "the pernicious caitiff." Nowadays this word is used in the latter sense.

**CAJOLE.** Cajole is to wheedle or coax a person with soft words. This word comes from the old French *cageoler* meaning to chatter like a bird in a cage, and once when we have known the derivation of this word we realise its full signification.

**CAKE.** In provincial English, a man wanting in ideas is "a cake." "He is cake only half-baked" is a common expression, though originally American. "To take the cake" is to excel or to be first in anything, and it is used in good as well as bad sense, e.g. a man who makes the worst blunder of all is said "to take the cake" and when a card-trick excels other similar tricks in cleverness, the expression used is "that takes the cake." Similar expressions are "to take the biscuit," "to take the bun," &c. "Cakey" means foolish, from the provincial English cake meaning a foolish fellow. "You can't eat your cake and have it too." It means you can't spend your money and keep it i.e. you can't reap the advantages of diagonally opposed courses of conduct. "Your cake is dough." You are quite disappointed or your project has failed.

**CALAMITY.** It comes from the Latin *calamus*, a stalk of corn. Lord Bacon writes :—"Another ill-accident is drought

and the spindling of the corn; in so much as the word calamity was first derived from *calamus* (stalk), when the corn could not get out of the stock."

**CALCEOLARIA.** It comes from the Latin *calceolus*, the diminutive of *calceus*, a shoe, and the peculiar thing about this plant is that each of its blossoms resembles a little shoe in appearance. \*

**CALENDAR.** It is derived from the Latin *calendae* meaning the first day of each month.

**CALENDER.** It means the cloth-presser, derived from the French *calandrier* meaning to polish or smooth linen-cloth. This word has nothing to do with the calendar that is the calends of the month, nor with the word *calender* which means a Persian monk and which appears in *The Arabian Nights*.

**CALENDER.** A Persian word meaning "greater," and it is used for dervishes.

**CALL.** "At call." This phrase is used in connection with money which is deposited and can be drawn at any time without previous notice. "To call for." (a) To demand as, your conduct calls for (demands) an explanation, (b) it is also used to signify "to call at a place with a specific purpose," as, you call at the luggage office and leave your instructions that your luggage is not to be delivered until called for. "Called to one's account." It means removed by death. The idea is that of being called to the judgment seat of God where one gives an account of one's earthly deeds. "A call before the curtain." When an actor appears before the curtain in answer to the applause of the audience in order to bow to them, he is said to have a call before the curtain. "A call on shareholders." A demand to pay up a part of the money due for shares allotted in a company. "The call-boy." The boy who calls the actors, when their turn comes to appear on the stage. "Call to the Bar." The admission of a law-student to the privileges of a barrister. The names of those qualified are called over. "Call of the House" (Parliamentary). When the sense of the whole House is required, an imperative summons is sent to every member of Parliament to attend and this is termed "Call of the House." The names of the members are "called over" at the muster, and those who do not attend are reported.

**CALLER.** Many English vocabularies have omitted this word, but it is still used in the sense of cool or fresh, in songs, novels &c. Sir Walter Scott uses this word in his "Antiquary." He felt so warm that what he wanted was a caller drink.

**CALLIOPE.** The muse of epic poetry. Calliope is the chief of the nine muses.

**CALLOUS.** It comes through the Latin *callosus*, from *callus*, meaning a hard skin. So when we speak of a callous (cold-hearted) person, we speak of one who is literally so hard of skin that he is insensible to feeling or the sense of touch.

**CANAL.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *canel* meaning a channel.

**CANARD.** The French word *canard* literally means duck, and metaphorically false news. The story runs that thirty ducks were taken, one was chopped up fine, feathers and all, and the others ate it. Then a second one shared the same fate, and so on, till there remained only one after an hour. This canard illustrates the voracity of ducks. Hence *canarder* means to spin yarns in order to humbug.

**CANARY.** The canary bird is so called because it was brought over to England from the Canary Islands. In the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus, the Romans got report of these islands which they called Canaria because of a number of huge size found there. The word *canaria* is derived from the Latin *canis*, a dog.

**CANDID.** Although this word is now used in the sense of frank or ingenuous, its literal meaning is white and shining from the Latin *candidus*, white, and *candere*, to shine. The word candidate is also derived from *candidus*, white, because the Romans used to array themselves in white *togas* whenever they stood up as candidates to seek office. The commonplace word candle also comes of the same origin—*candere* meaning to shine.

**CANNIBAL.** This is said to be a corruption of *caribal*, a carib, and the Latin word *canis* meaning a dog accounts for the present spelling of the word, canine meaning dog-like.

**CANNY.** The use of this word as applied to Scotchmen in the sense of cunning is entirely wrong, because it means quite the reverse. Persons or things of very pleasing qualities are "canny" and "cannyman" means a worthy man, this term being equivalent to "my good man," used in England.

**CANT.** A form of speaking peculiar to class, profession, sect, &c.: a corrupt dialect used by vagabonds and beggars; jargon. It is incredible that the word cant comes from one Andrew Cant, a Scotch Presbyterian minister. It seems most probable that the word comes from the Latin *cantus* so expressive of the singing or whining tone of certain preachers. Some authorities are of opinion that the word is derived from quaint.

**CANT, SLANG.** Although these words are often jumbled together as synonyms, in reality they are not used as such. Cant, apart from religious hypocrisy, has a reference to the old secret language of gipsies, thieves and beggars which consisted of allegory or distinct terms, and hence it implies



secrecy. Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, have made use of cant expressions such as "buckle under," "crusty," "two of a kidney," "lark," "pickle," &c., which they have put into the mouths of the low characters in their plays. Slang is nothing but a vulgar language or a kind of vagabond language, the motive of which is simply to express one's thoughts. Thus, a thief using a cant expression to another thief will say "he has prigg'd a wipe" instead of saying "he has stolen a handkerchief"; whereas one given to slang would say "he was at a tea-fight" instead of saying "he was at a tea party." Slang is certainly a language in itself, and it is formed by the same natural laws as a legitimate language is. So far as it is opposed to good taste, it should be discouraged. Another reason that may be urged against the encouragement of slang is the fact that its development may lead to arbitrary use of words and grammar. But so long as slang restricts its sphere and does not travel beyond it, there is no reason why it should not be encouraged.

**CANVAS.** Figuratively used for "sails."

**CAP.** "Capper-clawing." A fight between two women who tear each other's caps and make free use of their nails.

**CAPITAL.** "Capital crimes." Crimes which are punishable with death, such as murder, &c.

**CARNIVAL.** A season of mirth and festivity, particularly observed by the Italians from Twelfth Day until Lent. Any festivity is now called the carnival.

**CAROUSE.** It comes through the old French *carous*, from the German *gar-aus*, quite out or empty, being a reference to drinking to the last drop. When there is a regular carouse, drained and empty glasses are the usual sight.

**CARPET.** "Upon the carpet." Any subject or matter that is under consideration. "Carpet" is also servant's slang. When a domestic is summoned by the master or mistress to receive a reprimand, he or she is said to be carpeted.

**CARROTS.** Vulgar slang for red hair.

**CARRY.** The original use of this word in the sense of "guide or escort" is now obsolete. "Carry me out" (American). A dove-tail to an incredible story, sometimes varied by "let me die" i.e. I can't survive that. The expression implies that one feels faint, as it were, at hearing an incredible story, and wants to be "carried out" in the fresh air. "To carry on" in a special sense means to flirt openly, as "there is a time in the life of every young lady, when she feels like carrying on." In common parlance it means to make oneself conspicuous by acting in an unusual manner, whence "carrying on." "How we carried on" means what fun we had. Originally a nautical term, from carrying on sail. "To carry the keg" is said of one who gets easily crossed, the allusion being to fiery spirits.

**CASE.** At one time the term case was applied to persons as well as things. Even now an eccentric person is "a case." A "rum case" is an "odd fish" (which see). Among ladies "a case" means a love-affair. When two persons fall in love with each other, it is said to be "a case" with them. The expressions "a case for the police court" or "a case for the judicial court" are too evident in themselves to need any explanations.

**CASEMENT.** This is an abbreviated form of "encasement" which signifies something framed or cased in. Although we use this word in the sense of "window," it really means a portion of the old-fashioned window which opens like a door, the rest of the window being fixed.

**CASH.** This word is the old French *casse* and *cash* was a case or a box in which money was kept, until eventually the contents came to be called cash. Here is, however, a difference between money and cash. Money is a circulation medium, while cash is coin only except the Bank of England notes which are sometimes called "cash."

**CASK.** Fashionable slang for a private carriage.

**CASTE.** Caste is a doublet of chaste, and is the Portuguese *casta* meaning pure.

**CASTLES IN SPAIN.** Same as "castles in the air," meaning visionary and delusive projects.

**CAT.** "Cat-call." It is a kind of whistle used by a theatrical audience to denote their disapprobation. It is so called because the noise produced by it is like the call of a cat. "A cat has nine lives." If a person goes through many serious accidents without dying, it is said of him that he has as many lives as a cat. The common superstition is that one has to kill a cat nine times before she dies. "Cat-lap." A weak drink is so called contemptuously. "Cat-in-the-pan." A traitor or a turn-coat. Probably derived from "cake in pan" (pan-cake), which is kept turning from side to side.

**CATACLASM, CATACLYSM.** When an overwhelming change is brought about by revolution, the former should be used in preference to the latter. Cataclysm is strictly applied to an overwhelming flood of water, a deluge.

**CATCH.** "Catch on" (colloquial). To come into vogue or favour. Cricket was introduced into India by the English, and it soon caught on. "Catching the Speaker's eye" (Parliamentary). When two or three M.P.'s rise together, the Speaker calls upon one of them, and the person thus called upon to speak succeeds in "catching the Speaker's eye." "Catching a Tartar." A husband who is ruled by his wife is said to have caught a Tartar. In the middle ages the Tartars of Tartary were notorious for their terrorism and hence the expression.

**CATECHISM.** It comes from the Greek word *katechō* meaning to sound into one's ears, and a catechism is a system of teaching in the form of question and answer, especially on religious doctrine.

**CAUCUS.** This American term means a political organisation for carrying out a particular object and enforcing their views. It was originally a meeting for the purpose of nominating candidates and was first applied in 1878 by Lord Beaconsfield to the Birmingham Six Hundred. The word is said to be a corruption of the word *caulkers*, from meetings which were held at a house, belonging to the caulkers in Boston, a short time before the Rebellion.

**CAUSE CÉLÈBRE.** In law *cause célèbre* is a case of such importance as almost to become historical. Any trial which arouses great public interest and is talked of or written about for some years afterwards—such as the Dreyfus case—is a *cause célèbre*.

**CAUTION.** This word has two significations, (a) anything out of the common, that causes surprise or fear (b) anyone who makes himself ridiculous either by eccentric dress or manner. "He is all caution" means he is most careful and cautious, just as "he is all politeness" means he is most polite.

**CAVEAT EMPTOR.** This Latin maxim means "let the buyer beware." It is applied to all sales and bargains in market overt, where the purchaser takes no guarantee from the seller as to the latter's right to sell, or as to the quality, &c., of the article bought.

**CEILING.** Although ceiling only means the top of the room, it is curious to note that this word like the word *celestial* comes from the same Latin word *coelum* meaning heaven.

**CEMETERY.** It comes from the Greek *koimas*, *to sleep*, and a cemetery literally means a sleeping-place.

**CENSURE.** It comes from the Latin *censere* meaning to value or to judge. Formerly it meant giving an opinion which might be either favourable or otherwise, but now it is strictly used in the unfavourable sense.

**CENSUS.** A Latin substantive, originally meaning the amount of property a Roman possessed. Now of course it is used in the sense of decennial counting of the population as well as other subjects and details.

**CERES.** The Goddess of agriculture.

**CHAFF.** The use of this word in the sense of to ridicule may have arisen from the following custom: In some countries when a man has been convicted for chastising his wife, his neighbours empty a sack of chaff in front of his door to signify that inside that house "thrashing" has been done.

**CHaise.** A carriage either of expedition or of pleasure. Those who are ignorant of its French derivation are apt to suppose

this word a plural, but its plural is chaises. This word is a corruption of "chairs," referring to hackney chairs which were used as hackney coaches in 1624. It is supposed that it was in France that "s" was first substituted for "r."

**CHAMBERS.** These are private rooms in courts of justice in which judges, chief clerks and masters transact judicial business. A chamber-counsel is a barrister who gives his opinion in his own chambers, but hardly ever pleads in court.

**CHAMBERLAIN.** Formerly it meant a servant who looked after the chambers of a house or inn. The Chamberlain of London is the City Treasurer.

**CHAMPERTY.** Champerty is that kind of maintenance where the consideration for the assistance is a share in the subject-matter of the action. Thus if A contracts with B that he will assist the latter in recovering his lost property or he will himself recover the property in consideration of the share of the property, if recovered, it is champerty, and the agreement is illegal and void.

**CHANCELLOR.** That even the name of so exalted an official as a Chancellor—the Lord High Chancellor, to give his title in full—should have any connection with so paltry a thing as a lattice-fence seems inconceivable, and yet, as in the case of "cancel" the derivation of the word is the Latin *cancelli*, lattice work, *cancellus* a grating. The application of the name and the gradual evolution of the office came about thus:—Originally, in the Roman Empire, a "chancellor" was a petty officer stationed at the fence of bars or lattice-work in the law-court, to introduce such functionaries as were entitled to pass inside. The Emperor Carinus, the immediate predecessor of Diocletian, gave great offence by making such a "chancellor" a prefect of Rome. Later, in the Eastern Empire, a "Chancellor" was a secretary who sat inside the lattice-work to write, who also became invested with judicial functions and ultimately with a superintendence over the other officers of the Empire. From this high dignity to that of a modern English Lord Chancellor the transition is easy. But it is curious that throughout this process of evolution the appellation gained from the fact that the original station of office was contiguous to the lattice-bars of the court should have persisted to the present day.—Basil Hargrave, *Origins and Meanings of Popular Phrases and Names*.

**CHANDELIER.** It comes from the Latin *candelabrum* meaning "a receptacle for candles," but now it includes gas jets and electric lights.

**CHAOS.** The condition of the Universe when it was as yet "without form and void." Hence the word has come to mean utter confusion.

**CHAP.** As verb it is the same word as chop, to cut, and it means to have the skin of the face or hands become cracked

and sore, as from excessive cold. "The etymology of this word will not suffer us to write it chop; and universal usage will not permit us to pronounce it chap: so that it must be classed among those incorrigible words, the pronunciation and orthography of which must ever be at variance.

**CHARITY.** "Charity begins at home." This saying does not in any way support or encourage 'self' or in other words, it does not teach one to be selfish. What it brings forcibly to our mind is the fact that blood is thicker than water, and it tells us to show our kindness to those of our own blood first before we come forward to do kindly deeds unto strangers. A similar proverb in Russian language is "one's own shirt is nearest to one's body." The Russian proverb is more graphic and suggestive than the English proverb "charity begins at home."

**CHARIVARI.** The etymology of the word is doubtful. It means medley of sounds, hubbub. The London *Punch* is called "the London Charivari."

**CHASTE.** "Chaste as ice." One of the many beautiful phrases for which we are indebted to Shakespeare. Hamlet says to Ophelia "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny."

**CHAUVINISM.** Nicolas Chauvin was a blind idolater of Napoleon the Great, and hence, the term signifies fanatical patriotism. Whence Chauvinist, a jingo.

**CHEAP.** "Cheap Jack." In this phrase cheap does not refer to the price of an article but means merchant as in "chapman" or "cheap-side." Jack is the chap-man, hence a cheap jack is merely a merchant. "To be cheap of anything." To get no more than one deserves by way of punishment. The young pupil had to stand up on the bench for a few minutes for talking during the lesson hour, and he was cheap of it i.e., he deserved what he got. "To feel cheap." To be ashamed. The same as "to feel small."

**CHEEK.** "To cheek a person." To be impertinent to him, and this sense is retained in the phrases "none of your cheek"; "a cheeky fellow"; "to give cheek"; "to have the cheek," &c. "Cheek by jowl." In close proximity. Here was a doctor who never had a patient cheek by jowl with an attorney who never had a client. Shakespeare uses this phrase in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" saying "I will go with thee cheek by jowl."

**CHEER.** In Middle English this word meant face, and this sense is still preserved in the phrase "to be of good cheer." We say "a cheerful face" in the sense of feeling and appearing merry and bright, but this is really a pleonasm, which is due to the word "cheer" having lost its original meaning of "face." A cheerful face would literally mean "a face full of face," an apparent redundancy.

**CHEESE.** Colloquially "the cheese" signifies anything first-rate, as "quite the cheese" *i.e.* quite the thing. It is said to be the Hindustani *chiz*, a thing. Others think that in this sense the word is from the Anglo-Saxon *ceosan*, to choose, and Chaucer uses cheese for choice. One can never connect "cheese" with the Hindustani *chiz*, as used by Chaucer, because in his days no Indian words were imported into England. It is, therefore, clear that "cheese" is related to choice and not to the Hindustani *chiz*. As a school-term it means an adept, one who takes the shine out of another; a school-boy speaks of another being an "awful cheese" at cricket, grammar &c. At Cambridge University a dandy is termed a "howling cheese," and hence "cheesy" means showy, as opposed to "dusty." "Hard cheese" is a billiard term for "hard lines" *i.e.* bad luck. "Cheese it" means leave off. In this sense it is a corruption of "cease."

**CHEF, COOK, COMMIS.** There is only one chef in the kitchen, and he is sole head of the whole of the culinary department. He does not, of course, do any actual cooking, but just superintends, and is responsible to the management for the kitchen and its staff. A cook is the head of one department for which he is responsible to the chef. There is a sauce cook, roast cook, and so on. Each cook has several assistants working under him. These are called commis (assistant), and rank, in order of proficiency, as first commis, second, or third commis, according to the size and importance of the department.—*Answers*, May 2nd, 1914.

**CHEQUE.** Cheque in its earlier form was check and is identical with check, as to check one's accounts. A cheque is a method of payment which simplifies "checking." The word became popularly associated with "exchequer," and that accounts for its modern meaning.

**CHERUB.** An angel or seraph. The plural of this word is cherubs or cherubim. Some people in writing and speaking say "cherubims" which is wrong, because "im" stands for the plural. It is one of those words which have poetical association.

**CHESTNUT JOKE.** An old joke passed off as new is so called.

**CHEWING THE RAG.** It is a vulgar phrase meaning to wrangle. "Stop chewing the rag" means stop wrangling. As far as possible the use of this expression should be avoided. It is also used in the sense of keeping on harping on the same topic, as, what is the good of chewing the rag over it so much.

**CHICAGO.** "Chicago is pronounced 'shee-car-go,' with the accent on the middle syllable. It is an Indian name, and signifies 'the place of the skunk'—an evil-smelling animal held in detestation by American hunters."—*Pearson's Weekly*, dated week ending March 28th, 1914.

**CHICKEN-HEARTED.** Cowardly.

**CHILDHOOD.** Hood in the word "childhood" as in "priesthood" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon "had" meaning person, quality or rank.

**CHILDLIKE, CHILDISH.** The former is used always to signify innocence, the latter to signify silliness.

**CHIMNEY.** It comes from the Latin *caminus* meaning a forge or smelting furnace. Then it came to mean a "fire-place" and eventually it was used to mean the "smoke-flue."

**CHIN MUSIC.** A low phrase for "talk."

**CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK.** Burke so described William Pitt, because he was made of the same stuff as his father. A son who has his father's stuff in him is called the chip of the old block.

**CHIRPING CUP (OR GLASS).** Chirping of the bird is always pleasant and it makes the heart merry. Hence a chirping cup or glass is a cup or glass of liquor which makes the heart glad.

**CHISEL.** To chisel is to cut out. Hence to chisel a person is to cut him out of something, that is, to cheat him.

**CHITTY-FACED.** It is a term of contempt. A chit is a sprout and a child is so spoken of contemptuously. Hence chitty-faced means baby-faced, lean.

**CHOOSE, SELECT.** One chooses a thing deliberately by the exercise of his will. To select a thing is to choose it discriminately.

**CHOP.** "To chop logic." To bandy words. Lord Bacon writes, "let not the Counsel chop with the judge." "To chop upon." To meet suddenly, or to chance upon. "To chop yarns." To tell stories. Americans are fond of chopping yarns. "Chop-fallen." The same as "crestfallen." "A chop-house." A restaurant where chops and steaks are served. "The wind chops about." The wind shifts from one direction to another suddenly. "First-chop." First-class. "He looks like a first-chop article."—*Haliburton*.

**CHORD, CORD.** Both these words come from the Greek *chorde*, an intestine from which musical instruments are made. When we speak of music, we use the word "chord," but we say "cord" to mean a piece of string.

**CHOUSE.** To defraud. This word is derived from *Chaus*, a Turkish official messenger, who, in 1609, defrauded Turkish merchants in England.

**CHRISTMAS WAITS.** "Wait" is an old English word meaning watchman. It used to be applied to the Court Watchman whose office was to blow horns at certain hours of night. It is now applied to the Christmas carol singers.

**CHUCKS.** A signal among schoolboys intimating the master's approach.

**CIDER (OR CYDER).** It comes from the Hebrew *Shekar*, through the Greek *sikera* and the Latin *sicera*, all meaning strong drink. In old days cider used to be a strong alcoholic drink. Modern cider, however, is a perfectly mild drink. It was formerly called sizer and Chaucer uses it in "The Monk's Tales."

**CINEMATOGRAPH.** This word is also spelt kinematograph, and this is due to the fact that when this word found its way into England, *The New English Dictionary* had already finished with the letter *c*, and consequently it put the word under *k*. Sometimes words of this kind are manufactured by the lexicographer to see whether they would "catch on."

**CIRCUMSTANCES.** Literally it means "things that stand round one." We always use the expression "under the following circumstances," which, strictly speaking, can hardly be called correct, as the phrase includes three inconsistent expressions, viz., under, after, and around. But we do not realise this inconsistency, because we do not feel it.

**CITY.** "The City of Palaces." A name given to Genoa, Italy, Ancient Rome, Petersburg, Modern Paris, Edinburgh, and Calcutta (India). "The cleanest city in the world." A name given to Brock, in Holland, which is most famous for its neatness. "City of the Seven Hills." A name given to Rome as it was built upon seven hills.

**CIVIL LAW.** Municipal law. Properly it means the codes of law compiled by the Roman Jurists.

**CLACK-BOX.** A very talkative person. There used to be a custom among vagrants to carry a rattle and make a rattling noise with it to draw people's attention. A similar expression is chatter-box (which see).

**CLANDESTINE.** This word comes from the Latin *clam-dicstinus*, meaning hidden from daylight, *clam* meaning secretly from *kal*, as also in *celo*, signifying conceal. Hence a clandestine meeting is a secret meeting previously arranged for.

**CLAUQUE.** When a body of men are hired to applaud in a theatre they are called claque. This is a very old system and has been very much in use in France, where the word *claque* meaning clap was introduced.

**CLARENDON PRESS.** Oxford University printing establishment at Oxford. It was founded largely with profits from the sale of the "History of the Rebellion" by Clarendon, and hence the name. The Great Oxford Dictionary was printed and published by the Clarendon Press.

**CLARET, CLARIFY, CLARION.** These three words come from the same Latin root *clarus* meaning clear and bright. Claret is so called because of the bright red colour of the wine, clarion because of the clear and penetrating sound of the instrument, and to clarify is to make clear and bright.



**CLASSICS.** A term applied to the works of Greek and Roman authors, who are generally acknowledged as standard authorities. When other standard writings are intended, some distinctive name is always added, as the English classics.

**CLASSICAL LITERATURE.** This term signifies excellence in art. The Roman people were divided into classes and the first of these was called the classic for its eminence. This term "classic," as stated above, is applied to authors of standard authority and particularly to Greek and Roman writers.

**CLAW ME AND I WILL CLAW THEE.** This expression is used of mutual flattery, and it means "praise me and I will praise you." Claw means the foot of an animal with hooked nails. It also means to tickle gently with the hand; hence to flatter or praise.

**CLEAN.** "To clean out." To take away all available money from; to ruin: Charles Dickens uses this expression in "Oliver Twist." "To clean up accounts." It is a mercantile term meaning "reckoning." Though people more often use "to clear up accounts," yet "to clean up accounts" is as good a term as "to clear up accounts."

**CLEAR, VIVID.** Clear has many significations. We say "a clear night," "a clear case," "clear on the point," "three clear days," "a clear head," "this is clear." Vivid originally means living or lively. "A good style is the vivid expression of clear thinking." —*Huxley*.

**CLEAVE.** It must be noted that this word is used in two different senses. When we use it in the sense of "stick" or "adhere to" it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *clifan* meaning to adhere or hold fast. A wife should cleave to her husband. When this word is used to mean to cut or split asunder, it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *cleofan* meaning to cut the rough. It is quite an art to cleave wood.

**CLERGY, CLERK.** The common root of these two words is the Greek *kleros* meaning a lot. "Clerk" originally meant a priest and this sense is still retained in the word clergyman who is "Clerk in Holy Orders."

**CLEVER.** Wedgwood thinks that the adjective "clever" in the sense of grasping or snatching up comes from the two old English words "cliver" meaning a clutch, and the verb "clever" meaning to climb, to scramble. Skeat, however, suggests that the Middle English word "deliver" meaning nimble, active, might have modified itself into clever. Americans use the word Clever in the peculiar sense of good-natured, honest. What an Englishman would describe "a good sort of fellow," an American describes "a clever fellow."

**CLINCHER.** Something that settles a point or argument is called clincher, and when a person tells a yarn not far from a lie which cannot be beaten, such a lie is also said to be a clincher. Two notorious liars were matched against each

other. One of them said that he drove a nail through the moon once, whereupon the other exclaimed that he remembered the circumstance and that he went round to the back of the moon and clinched it.

**CLIO.** The muse who presided over history.

**CLOSE.** An enclosed piece of land.

**CLOSURE (THE).** When a member is speaking, another has the liberty to interrupt the speech by rising to move "that the question be now put." This is "the closure." If in the Speaker's opinion the debate is not exhausted, the motion is ignored and the former speaker allowed to continue. If the Speaker accepts the "closure" he rises and calls a division. If the closure is lost, the speech again continues. If, however, it is carried, "the original motion under discussion must be put at once to a division, with any other motions, necessarily consequent thereupon." This is a Parliamentary term.

**CLOVEN FOOT.** "To show the cloven foot" means to show a vile and roguish intention. Satan is represented with the legs and feet of a goat, which are, of course, cloven, and however hard he tried to hide them, he could not do so.

**CLOVER.** A better and happier state. Cattle are supposed to feel very happy when they are removed from a barren field into a meadow of clover. Persons of low rank who have risen to a better state of living and who try to get a footing in society owing to their wealth are often spoken of contemptuously as "pigs in clover." "To live in clover." To live in a prosperous condition. The allusion is to cattle feeding in clover fields, clover being a plant which is cultivated for fodder.

**CLUB.** In whatever sense this word is used, either for a society of persons, a heavy stick, a suit of cards, or a deformed foot, it comes in every case from the old German *klimfen*, to press together, to clamp. The derivation in itself is suggestive of "a knot," as for instance, a knot of men assembled together for any purpose. Club-man. This term, in England, is applied to one who lodges in clubs, as was the case with Edmund Burke, the eloquent.

**CLUE, CLEW.** A clue is a ball of thread which is left on the ground in passing into a subterranean passage so that this ball of thread may enable and guide one to find the way back. Hence metaphorically a clue is the discovery of a thread of evidence which helps an officer of justice in his search while tracing a criminal. But the proper spelling of this word which should be *clew* shows that this word is in fact the French word *clef* meaning a key, from the Latin *claris*. Hence to have a clue to a thing is to have a key to it, which helps the solution.

**COAX.** The old English word *cokes* meant a simpleton or gull. To coax a person is literally to make a fool of him by gulling him into doing something.

**COBBLE.** This word has three different roots, viz., (a) the Welsh *cob*, meaning a lump, a tuft (b) the Welsh *ceubal* meaning a skiff, something hollowed out, and (c) the old French *coubler*, to join together. From the first we have "cobble" as stones and coals, denoting rounded lumps. From the second we have the fishermen's "cobble" (boat), and from the last we have the word "cobble" meaning to mend clumsily. From the last we have also the word "cobblers," one who mends boots and shoes.

**COCK.** "Cock and bull story." The Pope's bulls were named from the *bull* or seal, which was attached. The seal bore the impression of a figure of St. Peter, accompanied by the cock. Hence after the Reformation any tale or discourse that was unheeded was on a par with a Pope's bull, which was a cock and bull affair.—*Words, Facts and Phrases*. "A stickler for accuracy writes pointing out that the phrase 'cock and bull story' should be 'cock or bull story.' His explanation is that in the old coaching days the first stage to the North ended at Stoney Stratford, where passengers going in different directions often met. Here were two old coaching houses, the Cock and the Bull, where travellers from the North, over the dinner-table, sought the latest news from town. Many of these yarns turned out to be very much embroidered, and became notorious as emanating from the Cock or Bull."—*The Evening News*, September 4th, 1913. "Cock of the walk." A leader or head of the party. Cocks usually fight for supremacy in their feeding-places which are called "walks," and the fight continues until one of them proves victor.

**COCKNEY.** It originally meant a milksop or one who had been overspoiled. Wedgwood in his *Dictionary of Etymology* says:—"The original meaning of cockney is a child too delicately nurtured—one kept in the house and not hardened by outdoor life; hence applied to citizens as opposed to the hardier inhabitants of the country, and in modern times confined to the citizens of London." Greenough and Kittredge in their *Words and their Ways in English Speech* say:—"Cockney is almost certainly 'cock-egg' (M.E. *ey*, 'egg'). The word meant at first an unusually small egg (such as are termed in New England litter-eggs, since the hen is thought to lay one at the end of her litter). Thence developed the meaning of a 'cockered child,' a 'pet,' a 'mother's baby,' or, in a wider sense, a 'milksop,' and next, 'a (pampered) citizen' (a feeble 'cit' as opposed to a hardy rustic). Specifically, it meant 'one ignorant of country matters,' as a greenhorn is one who knows nothing of city life. Its particular application to a Londoner was then natural, and was made as early as the sixteenth century." Thus one meets with a double sense of the word cockney: (a) one delicately bred and brought up, so as, when grown up, unable to endure

hardship, and (b) one totally ignorant of country matters, such as husbandry and housewifery as practised there. In its (b) sense, the tale of the citizen's son, who knew not the language of a cock, but called it neighing, is well known.

**COCK-SURE.** Certain. Hazlitt, in his *English Proverbs*, says :- "Cock here, is, I apprehend, a corruption of God, and the phrase was equivalent to, sure, by God."

**CODE.** This is derived from the Latin *codex*, the trunk of a tree. A good many words relating to writing or books forcibly remind us of the use made in old times of wood and bark as materials for writing upon.

**CODGER.** An old fellow. "A run old codger" means a queer old fellow. When this word is used in the sense of "cadger" (which see), it means a person whose manner of living is suspicious. Probably this word is derived from cogitators.

**COFFEE-HOUSE POLITICIAN.** Down to the time of George the First, newspapers were very scarce, and it was very difficult to get any reliable information of the current events of the day. This naturally caused persons of all ranks to resort to coffee-houses in order to get what news they could from one another, and at the same time to carry on political discussions. Oftentimes among these frequenters there happened to be one or two orators who by sheer force of their eloquence compelled the audience of the crowd. These coffee-houses were quite an important factor in the politics of that day.

**COFFIN.** This word is a form of "coffer," a chest or a box, and it comes through the old French *cofin* from the Latin *cophinus*, a basket. Wickliffe in his version of the Bible uses this word simply in the sense of a basket.

**COLD COOK.** An undertaker. Probably the word "cold" refers to the body which after being dead becomes cold, or it may have a reference to the hardened nature of the undertaker.

**COLOSSUS.** Figuratively it means a person of the most considerable importance, singled out from amongst others. Colossus was a statue of gigantic proportions placed at the centre of the harbour of the island of Rhodes.

**COMET.** This word is only a contracted form of the Greek *kometes*, which simply means long-haired, and in its derivation it does not in any way suggest evil omens, which in old times were generally ascribed to the appearance of a comet.

**COMFORT.** It comes from Latin *com* and *fortis* meaning strong. Originally it meant to strengthen or support. Although it has now come to mean to console or to soothe, it still retains its original sense in the phrase "giving aid and comfort to the enemy," comfort here being used in the sense of support. We use the two words aid and comfort as a phrase meaning support.

**COMMON.** This word is remarkable inasmuch as it is used in various senses of public, usual, frequent, of little value,

vulgar &c. It is derived from the Latin *com-munis*, *com* meaning together, and *munis* meaning serving. So literally it means the common weal. "Common-sewer." Literally it means a drain. It is vulgarly used for a drink.

**COMPARED TO, COMPARE WITH.** One thing is compared with another with the object of determining the points in which they agree or differ. A thing is compared to another when some sort of resemblance is believed to exist between them. Akbar may be compared to Elizabeth in the art of ruling, and he may be compared with Aurangzeb in religious toleration.

**COMPETE.** This word is of Scottish origin and appeared in the English dictionaries in 1820.

**COMPLACENT, COMPLAISANT.** The former means pleased with oneself and one's surroundings; the latter means willing to act in order to please others.

**COMPLAINT, GRUMBLE.** "When different points of view begin to express themselves in language, the tone of the pessimist becomes grumbling. That is not always the case, because there is another word, 'complaining,' which has a wider and less barren use; as, for instance, in the old riddle, 'When is a man justified in complaining to his wife about his coffee?' 'When he has more than sufficient grounds.' Grumbling is the hopeless expression of feeling, like the letting off of steam by an engine that has done its work. Complaint is the expression of discontent with an active view to improvement."—Archdeacon Sinclair.

**COMPLETE, FINISH.** To complete is to bring to a state which leaves no room for anything more to do; to finish is to merely bring to an end. A student finishes one examination, but completes the whole course of his studies.

**COMPLIMENT.** "He is fishing for compliments." He is looking for compliments by saying something which would call for a compliment. A pretty girl wishing a male companion to call her pretty says "You don't think I am pretty," and he replies "Ah, you are fishing for compliments"; i.e. "You want me to admire you for your beauty." "To return the compliment." To return a favour by saying or doing something pleasant.

**COMRADE.** From the Spanish military term, *camarades* meaning a chamber-fellow or one who sleeps in the same *camera* (chamber). School-fellows are comrades, i.e., companions having a common rule of life.

**CON MAN.** It means a confidence man, that is, a swindler's decoy. It is slang.

**CONCLAVE.** It comes from the Latin *con*, together, and *clavis*, a key, hence it literally means a room that can be locked up. Now this word is applied to an assembly of

cardinals, when they meet to elect the Pope. On this occasion each cardinal is kept apart from others by being locked up in a separate room, so that his vote may not be influenced by his colleagues. He is kept there day after day until at least two-thirds of the votes are in favour of one nominee, and these are collected in an urn.

**CONCORDAT.** A convention between the Pope and any secular Government for settling ecclesiastical relations is so called.

**CONDITION.** Though we use this word as vaguely as we do the word state, yet it literally means stipulation, agreement or terms. It comes from the Latin *condo* and *dico*.

**CONFUSION.** "To make confusion worse confounded." Milton uses this expression in "Paradise Lost." It means to add fresh difficulties to an already difficult situation.

**CONFUTE.** Derived from the Latin *confutare*, which literally means to cool boiling water by pouring in cold. So when one confutes an opponent, it literally means that he defeats him by causing a chilling effect.

**CONGRESS.** Americans omit the definite article "the" before Congress, and speak of it as Congress, as though it were a proper name.

**CONNIVE.** It comes from the Latin *connivere* meaning to wink, so that to connive at a thing really means to wink at a thing, that is, to pretend not to notice it. A person may connive at a thing without necessarily participating in it.

**CONSCIENCE MONEY.** Money sent anonymously to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by a person who has knowingly or unknowingly cheated the Government of its dues. It also refers to gifts made privately by people whom they have robbed in their lifetime.

**CONSERVATIVE PARTY (THE).** The name by which the Tory Party has been known since the time of the Reform Bill (1832), which the Tories opposed.

**CONSOLS.** It is an abbreviation of Consolidated Fund, which consists of loans made to Government at different times and at different rates of interest. The Stock was first formed in 1751 at 3½ per cent., and it forms the largest part of the National Debt.

**CONSTABLE.** Formerly this word meant a state officer of the highest rank, in fact, commander-in-chief of the army, although it is now used for a policeman. The Latin derivation of the word is *comes stabuli* meaning count of the stable.

**CONTAGION, INFECTION.** The word contagion comes from the Latin *contigere* meaning to touch. It is a process by which certain specific diseases are communicated from the sick to healthy individuals. Direct contact either with the affected

person, his excretions, or articles handled by him is the essential feature of the process. The diseases so communicated are said to be contagious, as, for instance, certain venereal diseases. Infection, which comes from the Latin *in* meaning into, and *facere* meaning to make, is also a process by which a disease is transmitted from one individual to another by a more subtle medium, as, for instance, air. Before the era when the presence of certain micro-organisms came to be associated with certain definite diseases, for instance, bacillus tuberculosis with tuberculosis, the term "contagious disease" meant something quite different from what was meant by the term "infectious disease." This distinction is, however, of no use now, for it is, not the contact which contagious disease depends on for its contagiousness, but the specific micro-organism responsible for the particular disease, to which both contagion and infection are due.

**CONTEMPTIBLE, CONTEMPTUOUS.** A contemptible person is one who is so vile and mean as to deserve the contempt of others. A contemptuous person is one who shows contempt towards others, in other words, a disdainful person.

**CONTENT AND NOT CONTENT (PARLIAMENTARY).**

In the House of Lords the divisions are taken, not by "aye" and "no," as in the House of Commons, but by "content" and "not content."

**CONTINUAL, CONTINUOUS.** Continual is that which recurs often; continuous is that which is unceasing or without a break. "Continual interruptions impede continuous work."

**CONTRADICT.** (*It* *Contradictus* from *contra*, against, and *dicere*, to say) has forced out of common use two native words withsay and gainsay, both of them originally popular, so that withsay has become obsolete and gainsay is learned. The reason for this extraordinary shift is apparently the use of the learned word in giving instructions to young children: "You must not contradict people," is a very early lesson in manners.

**CONTROLLER.** This word, when it means a person who keeps a counter roll in the accounts of others, comes from the French *contre rôle*, and should not properly be spelt comptroller; and therefore it is not correct to say "such-and-such a person is a comptroller of the Household Department of his Highness the Maharajah of Kapurthala." Comptroller is so spelt because it is falsely derived from *compter* meaning to count.

**CONUNDRUM.** This word, which came to mean riddle or puzzle in the eighteenth century, and which still retains that meaning, first originated in Oxford or Cambridge "as a piece of jocular dog-Latin." Then an odd person came to be so

called. Ben Jonson used it to signify a whim, and after that it came to mean pun.

**CONVEY.** It is a polite term for steal. Shakespeare uses this word in his "Richard II." in the sense of thieves, where he says, "conveyers are ye all."

**COOKING HIS GOOSE.** Ruining himself by his own act. A King of Sweden entered the enemy's town with a very small army, and his enemy out of contempt hung out a goose for him to shoot at. The King thereupon set fire to the whole town to cook their goose.

**COOL ONE'S HEELS (TO).** To be kept waiting while calling on some important personage. "Cool hundred" (A). The large sum of a hundred pounds.

**COP (TO).** It means to catch, as to cop a fever. The expression to "get copped" is to get caught by the police, the "cop"—an abbreviation of "copper"—being a slang for the policeman.

**COPY.** Although this word is very insignificant in its meaning of the transcription of any document, it is related to copious, derived as it is from the Latin *copia*, meaning abundance or plenty. The idea of abundance is conveyed in the fact that the original document is multiplied by the making of copies.

**CORN.** "Corn in Egypt." This familiar phrase is borrowed from the Bible, and it is used in the sense of a plentiful supply of provisions. "To tread on another's corn." To tread on the corns of another's foot is to cause him pain; hence figuratively it means to annoy another where he is most easily annoyed.

**CORNER.** "The chief corner-stone." The most important support of anything: the prop, the pillar. The Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, is the chief corner-stone of his Party. "To drive a person into a corner." To place him in such a position as to make it impossible for him to escape, and hence to put him in an embarrassing situation. "At first I had the upper hand of him, but at last he drove me into a corner by his incontrovertible argument."

**CORPORATE BODIES HAVE NO SOULS TO SAVE AND NO BODIES TO KICK.** The phrase means that groups of men acting together in the form of Boards will do things to their fellow-men which their individual consciences would probably not allow any one of them to do singly.—*Pearson's Weekly* dated week ending January 31st, 1914.

**COSTERMONGER.** Costards were the apples brought from Holland, and hence a costermonger originally was a seller of apples. Now, however, a street seller of fruit, fish and vegetables is called a costermonger.

**COTTON TO A PERSON (TO).** To dance attendance on a



person in a fawning manner. All the while he was trying to cotton to me, but I could see through his object. "

**COUGH UP.** A vulgar equivalent for pay up.

**COUNCIL, COUNSEL.** Council designates an assembly, as, for instance, the Privy Council. Counsel means advice, or the barrister who gives advice. Shakespeare uses the expression "wholesome counsel" to mean good advice in "Richard II."

**COUNT OUT (PARLIAMENTARY).** It is necessary for forty Members to be present to form a Parliamentary sitting, but when less than forty are present, the Speaker declares the sitting to be at an end (counted out).

**COUNTENANCE.** "To countenance." To support, as, I shall countenance your proposal. "To put one out of countenance." "To make one ashamed." "To keep one's countenance." To refrain from expressing one's thoughts by countenance, and hence to keep serious. "His countenance fell." He looked disappointed. "Out of countenance." Ashamed; confounded.

**COUNTER-JUMPER.** A shop-keeper's assistant, who jumps over the counter to go from one part of the shop to another.

**COUNTRY BUMPKIN.** Country horn, as opposed to "cockney" (which see).

**COUNTRY DANCE (A).** It is a *contra* (opposite) dance.

**COUP D'ETAT.** (French). This French term signifies a sudden stroke of policy which completely upsets the existing state of government. Napoleon the Third known as Louis Napoleon, by such a stroke of policy dissolved the National Assembly, broke up the Constitution, and assumed arbitrary mastership on the 2nd of December, 1851.

**COUP DE GRACE** (French). A finishing stroke.

**COUP DE MAIN** (French). Literally a stroke of hand, hence a bold stroke whereby something is effected suddenly.

**COUP DE THEATRE** (French). An unexpected turn in a drama to produce a dramatic effect. In ordinary life this term is applied to something planned for effect. Burke and his dagger, which he threw upon the floor in the House of Commons during his speech on the French Revolution with the words "There is French fraternity for you! Such is the poignard which French Jacobins would plunge in the heart of our Sovereign," was meant for a *coup de théâtre*, but Sheridan ridiculed this theatrical exhibition by saying "the gentleman has brought his knife with him; but where is the fork?"

**COUPLE.** This word couple has a beautiful signification namely that of a link between two persons as "husband and wife are a couple. It is loosely used in the expression "a couple of days" merely in the sense of two.

**COURIER, CURRIER.** The former means a messenger sent with a special message, and the latter is a man who combs horses (see "to curry favour").

**COUSIN.** "To go a-cousining." It is an old phrase meaning one who quarters himself on his remote relatives.

**COVE.** It is slang for a man, and it has such an evil reputation as to bar its appearance from modern dictionaries.

**COVEY.** It means a brood of birds, and, strictly speaking, should not be applied to persons or things as Thackeray does in his novel "Virginians."

**COWARD.** It is derived from the old French *coward* which comes from the Latin *coudia* meaning a tail. Just as a frightened animal drops his tail between its legs, a coward also turns tail meaning he is too afraid to encounter his opponent, and drops back from him.

**COZEN.** The Italian horse-dealers were notorious for their dishonesty and the Italian word *cozzone* means "a horse-courser, a crafty knave." Hence the word *cozen* is associated with cheating, and in Elizabethan times it was used in the sense of "selling faulty goods in a bad light" this being the common practice among horse-dealers. Shakespeare uses the word *cozened* to signify "robbed and deprived of." It may also be noted that some refer this word to cousin. In 1611, Congreve defined the French *cousiner* (verb) as "to claim kindred for advantage . . . , as he who, to save charges in travelling, goes from house to house, as cousin to the owner of everyone."

**CRACK.** "To crack a bottle." To drink in a friendly way. The allusion is to the silly pranks indulged in in olden times by the drunken persons who broke bottles and glasses during the bout. "To crack a crib" (slang). A burglar's phrase and means to break into a house with the object of robbery. "To crack a crust." To rub along in the world; to make a small but sufficient income. To crack a tidy crust is a common expression amongst the lowest orders meaning to get along in the world very well. It is probable that this has a reference to the breaking of the crust of a pudding and thus serving one with the pudding itself i.e. breaking the harder substance to get to the softer one. "Crack-brained." Crazy or eccentric. "In a crack." Instantaneously. "It is a hard nut to crack." It is a ticklish job to tackle or a hard problem to solve. "To crack up a person or a thing." To praise him or it highly. "Cracked." Made a bankrupt. A play on *rapt*, which comes from the Latin *rumpo*, to break. (Colloquial): When used as an adjective it means first-rate, as "he is a crack shot." (Sport): An adept, as "he is a crack hand at lawn tennis." (Turf): The crack is the favourite horse in a race. (Old): An insane person. (Thieves): Burglary.

**CRACK UP.** One often hears this expression in such phrases as "The London papers cracked it up" *i.e.* the London papers wrote about it so much that it became general public talk.

**CREATURE, FELLOW.** Creature literally means "that which is created." Thus a man, a beast, a tree, a bird, and so on, may properly be called creatures. We can go a bit farther and say that an angel, if there are any angels at all, may be called a creature. Etymologically, the word includes both animate and inanimate objects, and Milton actually uses this word for a stone. But now the application of this word is restricted to the animal kingdom only. "Fellow" comes from the Icelandic *fe*, property, and *lag*, laying *i.e.* two or more people having a property in common become fellows. The word fellow takes us back to the old pastoral times when men had no cities to live in, and the members of a family who had a share in the land which they tilled were called fellows. Later on the term acquired the wider significance of partners not only in land, but in anything.

**CREATURE COMFORTS.** Bodily comforts, such as, food, clothing, etc.

**CREDITABLE, CREDIBLE.** The former means praiseworthy and the latter signifies that which is worthy of belief. A creditable act, and a credible statement.

**CRIME.** The Latin for this is *crimen* meaning an issue at law, and thence any charge or accusation which one is called upon to account for.

**CRIME, SIN, VICE.** Crime is punishable because it is a violation of law or morality in general; sin is used in a restricted sense and implies violation of the Divine Law, and is punishable morally only; vice implies deviation from the right path and is habitual. To steal is a crime, to lie is a sin, and drinking is a vice.

**CRIMSON.** This word is used in a similar sense in German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and Latin, all of which languages have taken this term from the Arabic *kermes* meaning pertaining to a worm. Skeat and Mehu, however, believe that this word comes into the English language from the Sanskrit *krimijā* which means produced from a worm.

**CRIPPLE.** A cripple is a deformed person who walks with difficulty and almost creeps. The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *creopere*, meaning a creeper.

**CROAKER.** One given to pessimism. An alarmist, from the croaking of a raven.

**CROCODILE TEARS.** Hypocritical, from belief that the crocodile wept while devouring, or to allure its victim. Some think that the flesh from the eyes of the crocodile is so formed that the corner of each appears to hold a tear, and hence the expression.

**CRONE.** This comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning an ewe that has lost her teeth, and is applied as a term of contempt to an ill-tempered old woman.

**CROP.** "To crop out." To appear above the surface. He is so much prejudiced against a certain sect that in whatever he writes against it, his prejudice crops out. "To crop up." To happen suddenly. A few cases of cholera cropped up.

**CROPPER.** A fall as from a horseback. "Mr. Cody, in a brand-new monoplane yesterday while making a rapid descent, collided with a too curious cow and came a cropper." —*Pall Mall Gazette*, 1912.

**CROSS THE RUBICON (TO).** The phrase means to take a decisive step in any enterprise from which there is no turning back. The Rubicon is a small river which at one time separated Italy from Gaul. Caesar, whose military command was limited to the latter province, arrived at this river, and after some hesitation crossed it, exclaiming "The die is cast."

**CROUCH.** This is a corruption of the old English word couch meaning to conceal. Dryden says:—"Fierce tigers couched around." "Croucher" is a batsman with a low, stooping style. The world-renowned hitter J. L. Jessop is known as the Croucher.

**CROW.** "As the crow flies." It means directly; the shortest route between two given places. The reference is to the flying of the crow straight to its point of destination. "He went home as the crow flies," means he went home by the shortest route. (See "Bee-line.") "To crow over one." To be exultant over a vanquished person. The allusion is to cocks who always proclaim their victory over an adversary by crowing. "To eat crow." In common parlance this phrase means the same as to eat humble pie (which see), but it is more expressive, though less neat. Probably it was born in the camp. "To have a crow to pluck with anyone." To have a cause for slight complaint against anyone, calling for explanation. A similar phrase is "I have a goose to pluck with you."

**CROWD.** Americans use it as a synonym for an assembly. In old English this was a name for a fiddle or a violin, and Spenser uses it in that sense.

**CROWD, MULTITUDE.** A crowd or throng is a collection of persons or animals who crowd together and press upon each other; a multitude is a large number collectively. A rabble is a tumultuous assemblage; a swarm is a collection of persons, animals or insects who run together, and is appropriately applied to bees which fly together in numbers. The term "hydra-headed multitude," which is commonly misunderstood, is applied to the mob which the more it is dispersed, the more it swells. In Greek mythology "hydra" is represented as a monster having one hundred heads, and Hercules was sent to kill it. As soon as he chopped off one

of its heads, two shot up in its place. Hence figuratively it means an evil arising from various sources. The word is derived from the Greek *Hudra* meaning a water-snake. Hydra-headed is figuratively used for a difficulty which goes on increasing as it is combated.

**CROWN, THRONE.** A crown is what a king wears, and a throne is on which he sits. We say the throne of a country, but the crown of a king.

**CRUSH.** The expression to "crush out" should be only "to crush," because the word means "to force out of shape."

**CRUSTY.** An old cant word for poor-tempered.

**CRYING WOLF.** Shouting "danger" where none exists. In *Aesop's Fables* a shepherd-boy repeatedly shouted "wolf" when none was there, and at last when once a wolf actually came and he shouted "wolf, wolf," none came to his rescue, and he was killed.

**CUBIT.** It comes from the Latin *cubitus*, meaning the elbow, and a cubit does not appear to have any fixed standard. The measure was taken from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, and the inches varied according to the age and sex of the individual.

**CUI BONO.** This Latin phrase signifies "what will be the better for it?" or "what good will it do?" Jones in his *Dictionary of Foreign Phrases and Classical Quotations* says:—"Literally, 'for whom for good.' The meaning 'what good will it do,' is not strictly correct, but that is the sense which is usually attached to the phrase." *The King's English* says that this phrase is a notorious trap for journalists, and that a merciful writer will give his readers a little more help when using this phrase.

**CULPRIT.** It is an abbreviation of *culpa* *priti*, *culpa* meaning guilty, and *priti* meaning ready. Therefore a culprit, strictly speaking, denotes a prisoner who is on his trial. Although etymologists differ as to the origin of the word, they all agree that a culprit is a person accused before a judge of some crime, but not convicted. We improperly use it for a person who is actually proved to be guilty of a criminal offence.

**CULTURE, CULTIVATION.** Culture relates to the development of the individual and one of the various senses of cultivation is culture.

**CULVERT.** This engineering term first came into the English language about 1800, but so far as my reading has gone, I have been unable to trace its origin.

**CUNNING.** Formerly it meant understanding. Foxe in his *Book of Martyrs* uses this word in that sense.

**CUPID.** The God of love.

**CUR.** This word is a contraction of the term *curtains*. Under the old forest laws the dogs belonging to unqualified sports-

men had their tails cut short, and were called curtails. So a cur means curtailed dog. The word curtail afterwards became curtall which still denotes a horse whose tail is docked.

**CURATE.** This word is now applied to an assistant in a church, but, strictly speaking, it should not be so. The word curate literally means one who has the "cure of souls," and formerly a curate was any clergyman whether a rector or vicar.

**CURFEW.** It comes from two French words, *couvre* and *feu* meaning cover or extinguish the fire. Hence curfew means evening-bell. The Normans passed a law in 1068 enforcing the ringing of a bell at sunset time to warn people to put out the fires with a view to prevent conflagration. Although this law was repealed in 1103, this custom is still observed in some parts of England. Gray's "Elegy" opens with "The curfew tolls the knell of parting-day."

**CURIOSA FELICITAS.** This term which means a careful or nice happiness of style, was applied to the style of Horace by Petronius, the famous satirist and courtier of Nero, who died A.D. 67.

**CURLING UP.** Stretching one's self on a cot and making one's self as comfortable as one can under uncomfortable circumstances.

**CURMUDGEON.** This word is said to be properly derived from corn-mudgin, meaning a dealer in corn. As in olden times corn-dealers were reckoned most avaricious of men, the word has come to mean "an avaricious, churlish fellow; a miser, a niggard." When Dr. Johnson was engaged upon his Dictionary, an unknown correspondent suggested to him that the word was a corruption of the Fr. *coeur mechant*, wicked heart. On the strength of this Johnson says in his Dictionary: "It is a vitious manner of pronouncing *coeur mechant*, Fr. an unknown correspondent." Imagine the surprise and amusement it must have caused the natives of the French language, when they read in the complete Dictionary of John Ash L.L.D. the word "curmudgeon" being derived from Fr. *coeur*, unknown, and *mechant*, a correspondent. This shows how great is the risk the lexicographers run when they copy from each other. By Fr. Johnson meant "from" and not "French" as John Ash thought, and hence this blunder.

**CURRY FAVOUR (TO).** To curry a horse is to rub him down well, comb him and dress him. A chestnut horse was called a favel which comes from the French *favcan*, the colour of chestnut. The phrase "to curry favour" is a corruption of "to curry favel," and the groom who wanted to win the favour of his master curried the favourite horse favel. Hence figuratively to curry favour means to do a thing so thoroughly well as to make it a pass-port to higher favour.

**CURSE.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *corsian*, to execrate by the sign of the cross. "The curse of Cain." Cain was condemned to wander like a vagabond on earth for having murdered his brother Abel. A murderer is said to have the brand of Cain on his forehead. "Curse of Scotland." A name given to the playing card called the nine of diamonds. It was on the back of "the nine of diamonds" that the Duke of Cumberland wrote the cruel order to show no mercy to the Scots who had fought on the side of the Pretender at the Battle of Culloden.

**CURTAIN RAISER.** It is a short sketch which lasts for about 15 or 20 minutes and is played before the chief production of the evening.

**CURTILAGE.** A piece of land adjoining a dwelling house. It is more or less a legal word.

**CUSS.** A vulgar term for a worthless or disagreeable person, and it is a corruption of curse.

**CUSSEDNESS.** (American.) Innate depravity, perversity. "To do a thing out of pure cussedness" is to do it for mere mischief, without any reason or excuse.

**CUT.** A step or degree, as "he is a cut above me." "To cut one dead," to break off all connection with an acquaintance or friend, to avoid associating with him. Similar expression is "to cut an acquaintance." "To cut capers" is to behave in a disorderly or boisterous manner. Similar expression is "To cut didoes." "To cut one's stick" is to depart, literally to procure a stick for a journey *i.e.* to be in readiness for a journey. In Glasgow a song was sung in 1820 describing the adventures of an Irishman who "cut his stick" that being a reference to the common practice in Ireland of procuring a sapling before going off. Hence anyone who absconded was said to have "Cut his stick." Americans also claim this phrase which they say arose from the fact that runaway slaves usually cut a great stick before starting, to help them on their way. Some, however, say that the phrase originated in a printing office where a compositor who wanted a holiday said: "I shall cut the stick (composing stick) for to-day, and have a walk instead." Similar expressions are "to cut one's lucky" (which see), and "to cut dirt." "Cut it," be quiet, go away, the idea being that of asking a man to leave what he is doing and go away. "Cut short" is to shorten. "Cut short all intermission," says Shakespeare in "Macbeth." "To cut it short," means to bring to an end what you are saying or doing. "To cut out" is to excel, as in love-affairs one is said "to cut the other out" in the affections of the wished-for lady. "Cut that" means be quiet or stop. "To cut it fat" is to exaggerate or show off on a grand scale. "To cut," or "to cut under" is to compete in business. A cutting trade is one where

profits are reduced to a minimum. "To cut" (theatrical) is to strike out portions of a play to meet the requirements of the stage. It also means to absent oneself, whence "to cut lectures," "to cut hall," "to cut gates," which are common phrases. "Cut" signifies tipsy. "Cut down," means deprived, brought low. "To be cut" or "to be cut up" is to be vexed or hurt. Formerly it meant to be in embarrassed circumstances. "Cut off with a shilling" means disinherited from a will. When a person bequeaths a paltry shilling to his rightful heir in his will, the latter is said to be cut off with a shilling. "Cut to the quick" means feeling very much distressed at an unkind word or deed. The word "quick" denotes vital part and is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *cwic*, meaning living. It literally means hurting the vital part. "To cut the ground from under one's feet" is to leave one in a position from which he cannot extricate himself by any argument whatsoever. I cut the ground from under him by proving to him that what he quoted was not from Milton, but from Shakespeare. "Cut and dry." To have a speech cut and dry is to have it already prepared, the allusion being to timber cut dry, and fit for use. "To cut a figure" or "to cut a dash." To do something which draws the attention of the public and makes one prominent. It conveys the idea of making a show of oneself. Dr. Brewer in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* says that in the phrase "to cut a dash," to cut means "to make a masterly coup, to do something to be looked at and talked about. Dashing means striking i.e. showy, as a dashing fellow, a dashing equipage. To cut a dash is to get one's self looked at and talked about for a showy or striking appearance." One always cuts a dash with one's personal appearance, while one may cut a figure with one's personal appearance or by one's actions. "To cut a dido" or "to cut didoes" is a slang phrase meaning to cut a figure.

**CUTE.** A colloquial abbreviation of acute in the sense of smart or shrewd.

**CUTPURSE.** A thief who is a pick-pocket. Formerly purses were suspended from the girdle, and while stealing them thieves cut them off. Afterwards when pockets came to be used, those who pilfered them were called pickpockets.

**CUT-THROAT.** Murderer.

**CYCLOPS.** In Greek fable Cyclops were a race of giants who had only one eye in the middle of the forehead.

**CYNICAL.** It comes from a Greek word signifying dog-like, and hence it is applied to persons of snappish (ill-natured) disposition.

**CYNOSURE.** It comes from two Greek words meaning a dog's tail, and cynosure is the name for the constellation Ursa



Minor which contains the North Star, the fixed point round which other constellations revolve. Hence metaphorically it means "one who is the centre of all attraction or one on whom all eyes are fixed." Milton in "L'Allegro" says:—

"Where, perhaps, some beauty lies  
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

## D.

**D.P. (EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY).** D.P. stands for "Duly performed," said of a student who goes in only for D.P. *i.e.* pass examination, and not for honours. This term is only used at Edinburgh University. The term "poll" (which see) at Cambridge University is applied to one who obtains the ordinary degree as distinguished from "tripos" which consists of honours. "Tripos" is restricted to the Cambridge University and originally it signified the stool on which the champion of the University sat at the discussions of philosophy, when the Bachelors of Arts were admitted to their degree. Thence the term was applied to the Bachelor himself, and later on to the speech with which Mr. Tripos opened the proceedings, and also to the verses of the Bachelors, in which case each sheet of verses was called a tripos paper. In 1747 the honours lists were printed on the backs of these verses, and from that tripos came to signify an honour-list, and, eventually, the examination itself. Until the year 1824 the word tripos was restricted to Mathematics only, and up to 1850 none were admitted to the Classical examinations but those who had obtained honours in Mathematics. But now there are nine triposes: (1) Mathematical, (2) Classical, (3) Moral Sciences, (4) Natural Sciences, (5) Theological Law, (6) History, (7) Semitic and Indian Languages, (8) A Mediæval Language, and (9) A Modern Language tripos from 1885. Tripos is divided into three classes, first, second and third. At London University the two terms in use are "pass" and "honours." The same terms are used at the Inns of Court which call students to the Bar. A student who obtains a first class at the Final Examination of the Bar receives a Certificate of Honour; but the student who passes the best examination in part second (Final Examination) obtains a studentship of 100 guineas per annum, tenable for three years. The Studentship is not awarded, if the Council of Legal Education are of opinion that the result of the examination is such as not to justify the award, and no student is eligible for a Studentship (or even for a prize) who is over twenty-five years of age on the first day of the

examination. This limit of age does not apply in the case of honours.

**DWT.** It means a pennyweight. In this symbol *d* is the initial letter of *denarius* meaning a penny, and *wt* is the abbreviation of weight.

**DAB, DUB.** A person who is a "dab" at anything is one who does it exceptionally well, and although the expression sounds like a slang, it is not so, being a corruption of "adept" which literally means one "who has attained," referring to his skill. Then again "dab" is used to denote a gentle pressure with something soft and moist and in that case it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *dubben*, to strike. From "dubben" we also get "to dub." When a knighthood is bestowed upon a person, the bestower "dubs" him by gently striking the latter's shoulder with the flat of the sword.

**DAD (OR DADDY).** Boys and girls call their father "dad" or "daddy." This word is so childish as to be confined to the dialect of the nursery.

**DAFT.** Foolish, soft, not all there. From "daft" we get "deft" meaning dextrous, skilful, handling things neatly. For change of meaning compare "innocent."

**DAGGER.** It comes from the Spanish *daga*, a sword. "To speak daggers" or "to look daggers" is to speak or look in such a manner as to wound the sensibilities. Shakespeare makes Hamlet say:—"I will speak daggers to her but use none." At "daggers drawn" means at enmity, as if with daggers drawn and ready to rush on each other.

**DAINTY.** From *dant* meaning a tooth. Hence anything pleasant to the tooth i.e. nice in eating is dainty. Some think that it comes from the old French *deintie*, and is a doublet of dignity. The first seems more feasible.

**DAIS.** It comes from the Latin *discus*, a table. Properly it was the table itself, but is now used to designate the raised platform on which the table stands. Mediæval writers have used this term in five senses, (a) A canopy over a seat of state, (b) the principal seat at the high table in a hall, (c) the high table itself, (d) a cloth of state for covering a throne, and (e) the raised platform on which the high table in a hall stands, and this is the modern signification of the word.

**DAISY.** It literally means "day's eye" from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning day's eye, and the flower is so called because it goes to sleep when the sun sets, but in the morning it puts forth its petals to the sunlight. Almost all poets have immortalised the flower for which Chaucer had an especial admiration. Chaucer says:—

"That wel by reason men it call may  
The deisie or els the eye of the day."

The word daisy is also used in the sense of fine, pleasant or charming, and is slang. "A daisy time" means a pleasant time. "Isn't she a daisy?" means isn't she charming?

**DAM.** "Don't care a dam." This is an Anglo-Indian phrase. The "dam" which is really *damree* is the smallest coin current in India. Those who connect it with "damn" are mistaken.

**DAMAGE.** It is commonly used in the sense of recompense, the allusion being to the damages awarded by a Court of Law. "What is the damage" is equivalent to "what is to pay?"; "Damaged" means drunk, screwed (which see).

**DAMASK.** This word is used in two different senses. When it is applied to the beautiful table linen, it is named after the City of Damascus from which it first came. The other meaning of the word is that of a red colour and formerly it was generally used in that sense, now practically obsolete, although a red rose we still call a damask rose.

**DAME.** It comes from the Latin *domina*, a mistress and at one time the word "dame" was a title of honour which distinguished high-born ladies from the wives of common citizens. Even now "dame" is the correct title of a knight's wife. It was also customary for a chivalrous knight to call his queen "dame," and the word came to be applied to the Virgin Mary herself in the phrase "Notre Dame" ("Our Lady"). This word is not much used in England, and is applied to married women of all classes and also to an elderly and ignorant mistress of an elementary school. The word "madame" is full of royal dignity and at one time it was applied to the daughters of the King of France, as soon as they were born. This is shortened into Madam, which can be used in addressing even a royalty. Tennyson in dedication of his poems to Queen Victoria says:—"Take, Madam, this poor book of Song."

**DAMN.** "Damn with faint praise." This phrase appears in Pope's epistles to Dr. Arbuthnot and it means to praise in such a way as to show secret disapproval.

**DAMP.** It is impossible to separate to damp, signifying to check the vital energies, suppress, subdue, from dam, to stop the flow of water by a physical obstacle. The fundamental idea in both cases is the notion of stopping an orifice, and the two senses are not always distinguished by different modes of spelling—Wedgwood—*Dictionary of English Etymology*.

**DAMSEL.** Originally it meant a young person of either sex. A dame was a knight's wife, and damsel, its diminutive, knight's daughter.

**DANCE.** "To lead one a dance." This is a colloquial expression meaning "to divert one from a desired course and thus create delay in its accomplishment."

**DANDER.** The phrase "is your dander up" means "is your passion up," is generally considered to be an Americanism. Halliwell, however, says that dander meaning anger was common to several countries.

• **DANDY.** It comes from the same root as dandle which means to fondle, and it is equivalent to the German *laud* meaning a toy. In his *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle thus describes a dandy:—"a dandy is a clothes-wearing man, a man whose trade, office and existence consists in the wearing of clothes. Every faculty of soul, spirit, purse and person is heroically consecrated to this one object—the wearing of clothes wisely and well; so that as others dress to live, he lives to dress." Dandy was first applied to a fop in 1860.

**DANGER.** It comes through the old French *danger*, from the Latin *dominus*, a lord. The feudal lord at one time had absolute power with which he could hurt, when he chose, and naturally those who were under him feared his power and stood in danger of him. Thus originally danger meant power, and Shakespeare uses it in this sense:—"You stand within his danger, do you not?"

**DARK.** As adjective "dark" is commonly used for secret, as they had agreed to keep quite dark that transaction of the evening. In turf phraseology "dark horse" is one whose capabilities are not known to the public and whose chance of success is consequently uncertain. "To dark it" is to keep secret, and "darkmans" is an old cant word for night. Sailors call moonless nights "darks." A negro is termed "darky" or "darkey." "Dark-house" is a mad house, and Shakespeare in "All's well that ends well" uses it to denote the seat of gloom and discontent. "To darken another's door" is to cross the threshold of another's house.

**DASH.** "I don't care a dash." Similar expressions are "I don't care a rap," "I don't care a hang," "I don't care a fig," "I don't care a damn," &c. "Dash it" is similar to "bother it" or "hang it."

**DAUGHTER.** Almost all the languages have this word in similar forms, for instance, the Persian Language has *duhtar*. Dean Hoare says:—"I have somewhere read that 'deore,' now spelt 'dear' meaning beloved, also signified a 'daughter.' If this be correct, and certainly 'dear' is 'erse' for daughter, it conveys a very pleasing idea, as suggesting that any object of tender affection was called 'dear,' as being like a daughter to one."

**DAVY.** The expression "on my Davy" stands for "on my affidavit," Davy being a corruption of affidavit. In street

language "Davy" has also become synonymous with the name of the Deity, the common expression being, "so help me, Davy."

**DAVY JONES'S LOCKER.** A watery grave. A common term among sailors. The expression "he is gone to Davy Jones's locker" means he is dead. Jones is a corruption of Jonah, the prophet who was thrown into the sea. But Smollett in "Peregrine Pickle" says:—"Davy Jones, according to the mythology of sailors, is the fiend that presides over all the evil spirits of the deep." A "locker" in nautical phraseology means something that locks up or any receptacle for private stores.

**DAY.** "Day behind yesterday." Slang for day before yesterday.

**DAYSMAN.** The word is properly dais-man *i.e.* a man who sits on the dais. Hence it means an umpire or judge.

**DEAD.** Usually the expression "dead certainty" is contracted to "dead" or "cert" which is a turf term. "Dead-amiss" (racing) is said of a horse that is incapacitated from competing in a race through illness. "Dead-heat." Exact equality in race. "Heat" is an old Anglo-Saxon word, meaning exciting, as the heat of the battle, the most exciting part of the battle. Gradually the word has come to mean a part of any contest, and now we speak of "preliminary heats," and "final heats" in sport. Dead comes from the fact that the race between the various competitors has not decided which is the winner, when there is a tie, so the race from that point of view is dead, or useless."—*Pearson's Weekly* dated week ending the 10th January, 1914. A correspondent in *Pearson's Weekly* dated week ending 19th January, 1914, does not agree with the said explanation of the word heat, but gives the following:—"You take it as meaning 'useless' as far as a definite result is concerned, but I mean 'exact.' In the North we say a thing is 'dead straight,' meaning perfectly straight, or two objects are said to be in a dead line with one another. Thus, with two runners who contest a 'dead heat,' the term I think is used to indicate that they are exactly, or evenly matched." "Dead alive" is said of a person who is dull and stupid. "To be dead beat" is to be utterly exhausted. "Dead broke" means utterly penniless or utterly ruined. "Dead against" means decidedly opposed to. Never say "deadly against." "In dead earnest" means in very truth, without doubt. Similar expression is "in right earnest." When said of trade, it means quiet, stagnant, and when said of beer, &c., it means flat, insipid, tasteless. As verb "dead" means to loaf, cheat, sponge. "Dead-head" is a person who goes to theatre with pass or free ticket either from managers or authors. He is so called because he is really unprofitable to the management.

It is also used as verb. "Dead-letter" (post office) literally means an article which is, owing to some mistake in its production, rendered utterly valueless, and, hence, anything that has lost its force or authority by lapse of time or from other causes. This term is often applied to an instrument in writing which by some apparently trivial omission becomes useless. "Dead-lights" means the eyes. "Deadly" means extremely, excessively. Arbuthnot writes:—"So deadly cunning a man." "Dead-men" is the term given to wine-bottles after they are emptied of their contents. "Dead-meat" is a corpse. "Dead-men's shoes" means expectation of property after decease. The expression "to wait for dead-men's shoes" means to look forward to inheritances which is often considered a wearisome affair, and this expression is used by Fletcher. "Dead-on" originally meant to have some cause of complaint or quarrel, but now it is used in the sense of "very fond of," as "he is dead on her." "Dead-stuck" is said of an actor who breaks down, while acting, through sudden lapse of memory. "Dead-stock" is an unsaleable ware. "Dead-to-rights" literally means certain, without doubt. It is a police slang made use of by detectives when a criminal is found positively guilty, the common form being "I have got him dead-to-rights." It savours of Americanism. Nautically, the word "dead" is used in connection with various phrases with a meaning somewhat opposite to that of active, effective, or real. "Dead-lights" are wooden shutters used to close cabin windows, and "Dead-wind" is a wind which blows directly against a ship's course. Amongst other phrases are "dead-reckoning," "dead-eyes," "dead-flat," &c. "Dead-freight" is the sum of money which the merchant pays to the ship-master as compensation for the space which he fails to occupy after he has once chartered a whole ship. "To draw (or pull) the dead horse." To work for wages already paid, or doing work paid for in advance. It is difficult to trace the origin of this phrase, but it is probable that it originated at sea and has a reference to a ceremony performed on merchant-ships of dragging round the deck an image of a horse, and cutting it adrift to fall into the sea. The effigy of the horse signified the amount of labour that was wasted. "Dead as a door-nail." The door-nail is the plate on which the knocker strikes. As it is knocked several times a day, it cannot have much life left in it, and hence the expression. A similar expression is "As dead as the Queen Anne," but I am unable to trace the origin of this saying. "Dead as a herring." The fish herring dies the moment it is taken out of the water, and thus it is very seldom that one sees a really live herring. "Dead Sea fruit." Anything which attracts outwardly, but is really worthless, like the fruit which grows beside the Dead Sea

in South Palestine. "Dead slow." It is applied to persons or things, meaning dull or lacking in spirit.

**DEAL.** As noun it means portion, and to deal is to give each his lot, hence to have intercourse with others. "A great deal." A considerable amount, much. The allusion is to what a card-player receives as his share when cards are dealt for a game.

**DEAL, SERVE.** Do not use the former for the latter in a loose sense. Serving the potatoes, not dealing the potatoes, should be used.

**DEAREST.** When this word is used in the sense of "most hateful," as Shakespeare does in the line "Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven," it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *derian*, to hurt. In the sense of "beloved" it comes from the Saxon *deor* meaning dear, or rare.

**DEBATE.** It comes from the French *debattre* meaning to beat down. The object of debate is to sift and sort the subject debated, as lawyers do when they seek to beat down the arguments of those on the other side.

**DEBONAIR.** It is a French word for "gracious" and was the motto of Earl Lindsay. Opinions differ as to the accurate meaning of the term. Skeat in his "Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language" (p. 130) says that it is the French *de bon aire*, meaning "of a good stock." Wedgwood in his "Dictionary of English Etymology" (p. 446) is satisfied that air is the Italian *aria*, *aere*, meaning air in reference to aspect or cheer in the face of a person, and, hence, the word means good-humoured. Apart from the question of its origin, the term is always applied in English to a person who is genial, pleasant, and of good disposition, and Milton also so uses it in "Lycidas" where he says:— "Buxom, blithe, and debonair."

**DEBUT.** The first appearance of an actor on the stage is his *début*, and the actor is called a *débutant*. The first appearance of a person at Court, in Society, or in public as an author is also called his *début* in the sense of making a beginning or entrance.

**DECANTER.** The French phrase *à cant* is applied to anything set on edge. The English noun "cant" means a corner or edge, and "to cant" means to turn an object on its edge. The bottle containing the wine is called a decanter, because the liquid in it is "decanted" that is poured off.

**DECEASED, DEAD.** The former is applied to human beings only, whereas dead may be applied to human beings as well as to animals and things.

**DECEMBER (DECEM, or 10)** The tenth month of the early Roman year.

**DECIDE.** Before one comes to a final decision in a matter, he has, so to say, to "cut away" all extraneous issues, and this is borne out by the derivation. It comes from the Latin *decidere*, *de*, away, and *coedere*, to cut.

**DECIDED, DECISIVE.** A decided fact is that which is beyond dispute, and a decisive fact is that which ends all dispute.

**DECOY.** It is properly duck-coy. Coy is an old English word meaning to allure. Shakespeare in "*Coriolanus*" says:—"I will coy their hearts from them." "Decoy duck." It is a duck trained to allure others of its kind into a net, and is employed for this purpose. Hence it means a "bait." The word decoy comes from the old English verb "to coy" meaning to allure.

**DECREPIT.** An old man broken in strength is called a decrepit, but really the reference in this word is to the mute voice and silent footsteps which are characteristic of old age. The word comes from the Latin *de-crepo*, unable to make a noise.

**DEFACE, DISFIGURE.** Deface implies a deliberate act of destruction, as in defacing an inscription. The beauty of the face may be disfigured by small-pox or the weight of worries and troubles, in which case there is no deliberate act of destruction.

**DE FACTO.** It means real; in reality. The opposite of this is "*de jure*" which means lawfully or rightfully. "Thus John was *de facto* King, but Arthur was so *de jure*."

**DEFEAT.** "Defeat" and "defeature" are somewhat strangely connected with each other. Hence defeat was used in the sense of disfiguring the features by old writers. In *Othello* Shakespeare says:—"Defeat thy favour with an usurped beard," i.e. disfigure thy features with a disguised beard.

**DEFECTIVE, DEFICIENT.** Both come from the same Latin verb, but the word defective combines the meanings of defect and flaw.

**DEFENCE.** It comes from the verb "to fence" meaning to fortify by enclosure. Hence a fence city—often used in the Scriptures—means a city defended by a fence. Old writers have often used "defend" in the sense of forbid.

**DEFILE.** Literally it means to make foul or filthy, i.e. to pollute.

**DEFRAY.** To defray is to discharge the frais or expenses of anything, and the word is applied to expenses in general.

**DEFY.** "To defy" literally is to renounce one's faith (trust) which leads the enemy to expect the worst from the renouncer, and, hence, "to defy" means to challenge.

**DE HAUT EN BAS (F).** In a lofty, condescending fashion; superciliously. "She used to treat him a little *de haut en bas*."—Charles Reade.



**DEI GRATIA.** It means "by the grace of God," being a formula which kings add to their title.

**DEITY.** This word is cognate with the Anglo-Saxon *Tiw* (the God whose name is preserved in our word "Tuesday"). The root can be traced in the Sanskrit *div*, which, when applied to the Deity, signifies the effulgence of God, for "div" means to shine. Hence "diva" is one who shines.

**DELIBERATE.** "To deliberate" literally means "to weigh the consequences in the balance," being derived from the Latin *libra*, a balance.

**DELIGHTED.** Formerly this word meant "deprived of light." By his death Shakespeare deprived his brother-poets of his own chief light, and D'Avenant in addressing them called them "delighted poets."

**DELIRIOUS.** It comes from the Latin *de*, from, and *liara*, a furrow, signifying one who goes out of the furrow (track) in ploughing. Hence a delirious person is literally one whose mind is not properly cultivated and such a person is, as a rule, of irregular intellect under the influence of delirium.

**DELIVER.** It comes from the Latin *de*, from, and *liber*, free, and hence literally it means to set free. A person frees himself by giving up his claims, and from this sense the word is used to signify "to give up one's claims to the control of another," and, hence, to hand over.

**DEMERIT.** Originally this word meant exactly the opposite of what it means now, namely, the worth of a person, Shakespeare uses it in that sense.

**DEMESNE.** Skeat thinks that this word is misspelt on account of its being confounded with the old French *mesnee* meaning a household. This word really means an estate of which one is lord or master, and is equivalent to "domain" which comes from the Latin *dominus* meaning a master or a lord. It must be noted that "demesne" has nothing to do with "demean" which means to conduct or deport oneself, coming as it does from the old French *demener*, to guide or to conduct. "Demean" is also used in the sense of to debase or to degrade, but this is owing to the fact that the Latin preposition *de*, and the English word mean (worthless) were wrongly joined together.

**DEMISE.** This word is used to mean the death of a person, probably owing to the fact that when a king dies his crown becomes "demised" (transferred) on his successor. This word is derived from the Latin *dimittere*, to send away, to dismiss, and so the word really means to transfer.

**DEMORALIZE.** When Professor Lyell was in the United States, he called upon Doctor Webster, who, in reply to a question, said he had "only coined one word, the verb to demoralize, and that, not for the Dictionary, but for

a pamphlet published in the last century."—*Travels in the United States.*

**DEMUR.** In law "to put in a demurrer" is to raise preliminary objections that the plaintiff is not entitled to the relief which he claims. Hence "to demur to a proposition" is to make objections.

**DEMURE.** This word is supposed to be derived from Middle English *mure*, meaning ripe, mature. But the meaning of the word "demure" does not approach closely to that of ripe. Its oldest meaning is settled, calm, and was used of the sea, as, "demure sea." In Milton's time the word meant sedate, and Milton uses it in that sense:—

"Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast, and demure."

**DEN.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *dene* meaning a valley. Hence it means a narrow valley; the lair of a lion &c. The original sense of "narrow valley," as its derivation implies, is retained in the phrase "a gamblers' den."

**DE NOVO.** It means afresh, literally from something new *i.e.* from the beginning.

**DEODAND.** It comes from *deo* meaning God, and *dare* meaning to give. Formerly anything which had caused the death of a person was forfeited to the Crown, and hence "deodand" means forfeiture.

**DEPART.** It means to part thoroughly. In the ancient prayer books the marriage service was "till death us depart," which has been corrupted into "till death us do part."

**DEPOSITARY, DEPOSITORY.** The former denotes a person with whom a thing is deposited, and the latter a place where a thing is deposited.

**DEPRAVATION, DEPRAVITY.** Depravation is the act of corrupting; depravity is the condition of being depraved. Gambling in itself is a depravation which eventually reduces its votary to a state of depravity.

**DE PROFUNDIS.** It literally means "out of the depths." It is the hundred and thirtieth psalm which is sung by Roman Catholics when the dead are committed to the grave. "De Profundis" is a great work by Oscar Wilde.

**DERIVE.** It comes from the Latin *de* meaning from, and *rivus* meaning a stream, and originally it meant to *de-rivus* meaning to draw off water from a river or stream.

**DERRING-DO.** "Derring-do" is used several times by Spenser, who explains it as "manhood and chevalrie." It is due to his misunderstanding of a passage in *Lidgate*, in which it is an imitation of Chaucer, complicated by a misprint. Scott took it from Spenser—"Singular," he again muttered to himself, "if there be two who can do a deed of such derring-

do "' (*Ivanhoe*, ch. 29) and from him it passed to Bulwer Lytton and later writers—Ernest Weekley—*The Romance of Words*.

**DERVISH.** It is a Persian word and comes into English through the Turkish language.

**DESCRY.** This word is probably a variation of describe and in its early use has been confused with "deery." It means literally to make an outcry on discovering something, for which one is on the watch, and hence, to "descry" is to succeed in discerning or discovering. "To deery" is to cry down *i.e.* to run down or condemn.

**DESIGN.** It comes from the Latin *designare* meaning to mark out, and hence to frame in the mind, *i.e.* project or scheme.

**DESPATCH.** This can be also written "dispatch" and correctly too, although some condemn the word, "dispatch."

**DESSERT.** It comes from the French *desservir* meaning to clear the cloth, and dessert literally means the cloth removed. That which comes on the table after the cloth is removed is dessert what we call fruits.

**DESTRUCTIVE (THE).** As a political term it had its birth in 1832.

**DESULTORY.** It comes from the Latin *de* meaning from, and *salio* meaning to leap. A desultor is a rider in a circus who leaps from the back of one horse to another, and hence to do a thing in a desultory manner is to do it in an abrupt, irregular manner.

**DETERMINED, RESOLUTE.** The former implies indifference to the opinions of others; the latter implies indifference to the consequences of one's own actions.

**DETEST.** It comes from the Latin *de-testor*, and simply means to witness against.

**DETEST, ABHOR.** Detest applies more to our intellect; abhor more to our feelings. The former imports not only strong dislike, but strong disapprobation, while the latter imports simply strong dislike. Detest signifies indignation, and abhor signifies horror, *e.g.* we detest treachery, but we abhor being in debt.

**DETINUE.** This French word means "a thing" (detained). This term was formerly applied to an action for obtaining goods wrongfully detained.

**DETRIMENT.** It comes from the Latin *de* meaning from, and *tritus*, the past participle of the verb *tero* meaning to rub. Hence the word gained the signification of injuring and hurting.

**DEUCE.** The word "deuce" is euphemism for the devil, and so is the word "dickens." "What the deuce or what the

"dickens do you mean by this" is an expression one often hears in England.

**DEVELOP.** "To develop" is to unfold or literally to bring to light by degrees, and should not be used for "expose" which simply means to reveal or lay bare.

**DEVICE, DEVISE.** A device is something designed either for a good or a bad end in view. A devise is a gift of land bequeathed by a last will.

**DEVIL.** "Devil's advocate." A mock accuser who seriously and maliciously criticises another. Its origin is ecclesiastical.

**DEVILLING (LAW).** Voluntary work done by junior briefless barristers who work their hardest in getting up case by Counsel before entering Court. In return they get an insight into legal procedure and thus have opportunities of advancing themselves.

**DIAL.** It comes from the Latin *dialis* meaning belonging to the day, and hence "a device for showing the time of day."

**DIAMOND.** This word is corrupted from "adament."

**DIANA.** A virgin goddess who presided over chastity, and also over marriage and hunting.

**DIARY.** It comes from the Latin *dias* meaning day. Hence a diary records the events of days.

**DICKY (OR DICKEY).** In common parlance, "dicky" is a shabby shirt front; formerly a worn out shirt. It is slangily used for "seedy" or "out of sorts," as "he looks dicky." It is also slangily used for shaky, as "this table is dicky." "Dicky-bird" is a term employed to signify (a) professional singer of any grade, and (b) woman of loose character. The expression "it is all dicky with him" means it is all over with him.

**DICTUM, DICTATE.** Both these words come from the Latin *dicere* meaning to say, and hence that which is said. Dictum is a short but instructive saying, whereas dictate is something in the nature of a command, and is taken either in a good or bad sense. A rational being listens to the dictates of his conscience, but an irrational being yields to the dictates of passion. Dictate is employed to signify that which passes inwardly.

**DIDDLE.** This verb originally means to move to and fro with a view to engage the attention of an observer while a trick is being played upon him, and hence to deceive by juggling tricks. He diddled me means he cheated me.

**DIE.** The use of this word in the superlative sense of "to have a great desire for" as in the phrase "I am dying to see you" is not desirable. "To die in one's shoes." To die a violent death, especially by hanging. This phrase should not be confused with the phrase "to be in one's

shoes," *i.e.* to be in one's place, as "I would not be in his shoes for the world."

**DIFFER WITH, DIFFER FROM.** It is commonly but erroneously supposed that where opinions are concerned, the term should be "differ with" and that in all other cases it should be "differ from." Although we say "I differ with you in opinion," we never say "my opinion differs with you," but always "my opinion differs from yours." It is worthy of note that it is not the circumstance that the conversation is concerning opinions that make use of the preposition "with." The reason is to be found in the varied meaning of the word "differ." When we say "I differ with you in opinion," the word differ has not the same meaning as in the expression "I differ from you in stature." In the former expression it has an active, in the latter, a passive, signification. In the first case, the thing to be expressed is an act of the will, and in the second case the will is passive. The expression "I differ with you in opinion" is equivalent to I contend with you or I dispute with you on that point and you with me, the dispute being mutual. "I differ from you in stature" means I am different from you in stature. In this case the statement is concerning a fact about which there cannot be any dispute at all.

**DIFFERENCE, DISTINCTION.** A difference is the existing unlikeness or dissimilarity between things, whereas a distinction is a difference drawn by the mind.

**DIFFERENCE, VARIETY.** Difference comes from the Latin *dis* and *fero* meaning to put into two. The word originally signified the division of one into two, each part being dissimilar in some respects to the other. Variety comes from the Latin *varus*, a spark or speckle. The word originally signifies that its best type is a group of natural specks. These words are not synonymous with each other. One draws differences in the works of nature by minute observation, and one admires the variety of colours in nature. A difference of opinion is not the same thing as a variety of opinion. The former implies a more or less direct opposition, the latter simply pertains to more than one way of expressing an opinion about the same question. Take for instance the Home Rule Bill which is at present before the Parliament. When we say that there is a difference of opinion regarding this question we mean that one party votes for it and the other against it. But when we say that there is a variety of opinion regarding this Bill, we mean that there is no real disharmony, and that both the parties are of opinion that Home Rule should be granted to Ireland, but the methods they suggest are not the same.

**DIFFERENT TO, DIFFERENT THAN.** As a rule, the English writers and speakers themselves are guilty of

making use of these wrong phrases which, correctly speaking, should be "different from."

**DIFFIDENCE.** Although it now means want of confidence in one's own abilities, formerly it meant want of confidence in others.

**DIGGINGS.** Colloquially it is used for lodgings, the reference being to mine or gold-field, in which sense the word is commonly used. But it should be noted that in the sense of "lodging," it should always be used in plural.

**DILAPIDATE.** Although we call an old, worn out hat a dilapidated hat, it is not strictly proper. The word comes from the Latin *dis* meaning apart, and *lapis* meaning a stone, signifying decay of stone, and strictly speaking it should be applied to a building in a ruined state.

**DILIGENCE.** A four-wheeled stage coach drawn by four or more horses and used in those parts of the Continent where there are no railways. It is a huge lumbering coach and travels about six or seven miles an hour. Charles Dickens refers to this coach in some of his novels.

**DINE.** "To dine with Duke Humphrey." This is a polite way of speaking of people who are never asked to dine out. A monument of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was supposed to be in old St. Paul's, and many poor people talked about "going to see the Duke" at dinner time, and this became twisted into "dining with Duke Humphrey." "Dining room." A slang for the mouth. "Dinner-set." A slang for the teeth.

**DINT.** The same as the Anglo-Saxon *dynt* meaning force, as of a blow. A dint is a blow so strong as to make a dent. The common expression is "by dint of" used in the sense of by forcible means.

**DIOCES.** It comes from the Greek *dia*, throughout, and *oikos*, house, that is, the administration of a household. Ecclesiastically the jurisdiction of a bishop is so called. (See economy.)

**DIPPY.** An extremely vulgar term for one who is mentally unbalanced.

**DIRECTLY.** It properly means "in a direct or straight course or manner." But its use has been extended to signify "immediately," as "directly I arrived in England, I joined my Inn." Americans condemn this use of the word, although it is popular in England.

**DIRGE.** It is a contraction of the word *dirige*. The solemn anthem of the Roman Catholic Church was known by that name. In poetry a dirge is a sad, plaintive song.

**DIRT.** "Dirt cheap." Very cheap; almost too cheap. "To eat dirt." To put up with a slight or an insult without

being able to retort. It comes from the East. Equivalent to "to eat the humble pie." (Which see.)

**DIRTY.** "To wash one's dirty linen in public." To discuss one's private affairs. If one talks about his own private affairs in the presence of his friends or servants, he is said to wash his dirty linen in public.

**DISCARD.** Literally it means to throw cards out of one's hands at certain games, and hence, to discard a thing is to reject it.

**DISCHARGE, PERFORM.** By performing a task, we discharge our duties *i.e.* we pay off what was due from us.

**DISCREET, DISCRETE.** Discreet means having the power to be prudent; discrete means separate, distinct.

**DISEASE.** It literally means want of ease; and hence one who is not at ease or one who is ill at ease is, according to the etymology, diseased. Of course we apply a stronger meaning to the word to denote bodily ailments.

**DISH.** "To dish" is to overthrow an enemy by baffling him in his plans. This word was first used by the late Earl of Derby who said that such and such a measure would "dish the Whigs." It is supposed to be a corruption of dash which itself conveys the idea of "damn," as in the vulgar oath "dash it" or "damn it."

**DISHED.** A contraction of the old English word *disherit* (disinherit). When a person finds a property which he had expected to inherit left to some one else, he is said to be dished. Byron uses it in *Don Juan* where he says:— "Where's Brummel? Dished."

**DISHEVELLED.** This word comes from the French *descheveler* meaning to put the hair out of order. Hence the expression "dishevelled hair" which is used even by natives is a pleonasm.

**DISPARAGE.** It comes from the Latin *par* meaning equal. Hence to disparage a person is to equal him with another of inferior condition so as to lower him in the estimation of others.

**DISSENT, DISSENSION.** The former lays stress on difference of opinion, and the latter on the resulting discord.

**DISTINCT, LUCID.** Distinct properly means clearly marked out, while the primary meaning of lucid is emitting light. We say "a distinct idea" and a "lucid account."

**DISTINGUISH, SEPARATE.** Things are distinguished from each other by their qualities, by way of contrast, while they are separated by distance of time or place.

**DIVAN (OR DIWAN).** It is a Turkish word meaning the elevated bench at the upper end of the room where the principal persons sit. Hence it has come to mean a council or

Court of Justice. In Hindustani language the word "Diwan" means "prime minister."

**DIVERS, DIVERSE.** Divers implies severalty, and diverse denotes difference.

**DIVERSION.** Literally it means that which diverts or turns us aside from every day cares.

**DIVEST.** The opposite of invest. It comes from the Latin *de vestio* meaning to undress, hence to deprive of.

**DIVINITY.**

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will."

These immortal words which Shakespeare puts in the mouth of Hamlet embody the same idea as is conveyed in the saying "Man proposes, God disposes." It is evident that Shakespeare believed in the Doctrine of Fatalism which originated with Eastern philosophers, thinkers and metaphysicians. Compare Tennyson's last two lines in his "In Memoriam,"

"The one far-off, divine event  
To which the whole creation moves."

**DIZZY, GIDDY.** These two words are identical in their literal meaning. In old English *dysig* (now dizzy) was the usual word for "foolish," and *gydig* (giddy) meant exactly the same. The etymology of both these words is worth studying. *Gydig* is a derivative of god; and *dysig* is from the Indo-Germanic root *dhives*, a god. Thus it will be seen that in the earliest days of the birth of these words, they meant "possessed by a god" equivalent to possessed by "divine madness." In old English, however, these words lost this sense and came to denote want of common sense. They were also employed to signify "the swimming of the head," a sensation experienced by those who feel giddy or dizzy. Observe the early sense of the word giddy, viz. that of foolish in the sense of our modern phrase "giddy conduct."

**DO.** This common verb is used in English in two senses, viz., as an auxiliary, and as a substitute. It is also used as an emphasising auxiliary, as "do come to see me to-morrow." In the sentence "I work as hard as you do" it is a substitute for the verb "work." We often make enquiries after a friend's health by saying to him "how do you do?" and in this phrase the verb "do" is equivalent to "get on" or literally to "perform the offices of life." It is a mistake to suppose that here the word "do" is cognate with the Sc. *dow*, which means to thrive. This simple word is one of those which make themselves very useful and serviceable in their various applications, especially, in slang and colloquial phrases. As noun it signifies a fraud. Dickens in his "Sketches by Boz" says: "I thought it was a do to get me out of the house." As verb, it means (a) to cheat, as "he



tried to do me"; (b) to visit a place, in which sense tourists use the word, as, "to do France," or "I have done France." "Done" means exhausted sometimes varied to done up, as, "I am fairly done up." "Done" also means convicted or sentenced, as well as outwitted or cheated. "Done brown" means befooled, i.e. completely cheated, as, "he is done brown." "Done over" means intoxicated. "To do a person" in pugilism is to excel him in boxing, and "to do a book" is to write a book. "To do a beer" is to take a drink, and "to do a bit" is to eat something. "To do one proud" means to flatter, literally to make one feel proud. This is an American expression used as an answer by the person who is complimented. When you tell a person that he is an honour to his country, he may answer "Sir! You do me proud." When an American says to a person "Will you have a drink," the latter may answer "you do me proud" (see "invitation"). "To do time" is to serve a term of imprisonment. "To do a hall or a theatre" is to visit a music hall or a playhouse. The expression "do tell" serves as a very useful interjection to a listener who in order to show his interest in the story which is being related to him makes use of it by way of satisfying the narrator. It is equivalent to "Indeed?" or "Really?" which are more commonly used. "That has done it." It is one of the most popular colloquial phrases. It signifies "that has brought it about" or "that has caused it," the latter being equally popular. If one girl teases another who loses her temper, a third person present may say "that has done it," that is, your teasing her has made her lose her temper. "Done." It is the expression used when a bet is accepted, though in common parlance, it means exhausted.

**DOCKET.** A small piece of paper or parchment, containing a summary of a large writing. In this sense it is a diminutive of "dock" in its original signification of a bundle, bunch of thread.

**DOCTOR.** This word comes from the Latin *docere* meaning to teach, and literally it means "teacher," a title given to those who had received from a university the "attestation of their competence to teach some branch of learning." The university of Bologna in 1130 was the first to confer the degree of the doctor of law, and Paris soon after followed the example. But it was not until the following century that England too followed suit. For the first two centuries since the introduction of the title the lawyers and the theologians were the only individuals to receive it, and it was not before the fourteenth century that the doctorate was introduced in medicine. In philosophy, science, literature and music, it was given in comparatively recent times either on examination or on writing a thesis to the satisfaction of the Senate, or else "it was an honorary degree, conferred in consideration of the general

reputation of the recipient for eminence in some particular branch of learning, philosophy or science." Ladies have occasionally shared the honour of a doctorate in Germany even in the past, but now many universities give women doctor's degree in medicine and science. To the lay people the word doctor has been more or less synonymous with medical practitioner, whether he be a physician or surgeon, as it is the medical practitioner that the masses most often come in contact with. "To doctor or cook an account." To falsify or tamper with an account in order to cheat.

**DOCUMENT.** Formerly this word was used as a verb meaning to teach or to instruct. "I am finely documented by my own daughter," says Dryden.

**DODGE.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *deogian* meaning to disguise or to conceal.

**DOG.** In expressions such as "a sad dog," "a gay dog," "a jolly dog," the word dog means a man, and it has come to mean in society a gentleman of an amorous turn of mind, and who is very popular among the ladies. "Dog cheap." Very cheap. This phrase is a perverted form of the old English god-chepe, meaning a good bargain. "Dog Latin." Physicians, lawyers and others who had only a scanty knowledge of Latin, debased the language in its form in the mediæval times and this was called dog Latin. "Dog-collar." A stiff, stand-up collar which was at one time much in favour among dandies. "To dog-ear a book." To fold down the corner of a page in order to keep the place where reading is left off is to dog-ear it. "Going to the dogs." Ruining one's self utterly through one's own conduct. In the East dogs are scavengers and they become so unclean that they are not even touched, and hence the expression.

**DOLDRUMS.** "The doldrums" is that region of the ocean in which winds blow so violently as to arrest the progress of a ship and cause delay. When ships have to depend upon wind only for their voyage, the sailors feel very low-spirited and hence we have the phrase "in the doldrums" meaning out of spirits or in the dumps.

**DOLE.** Literally the portion dealt, hence a portion given in charity.

**DOLL.** It is an abbreviation of Dorothy, and a doll is called a doroty in Scotch. Formerly a doll was called a baby or puppet.

**DOLLY-SHOP.** It is an old name for a shop where rags are bought and sold. It is so called because it had a black doll suspended over its door for a sign. Dolly shops are no better than unlicensed pawn-shops.

**DOMESTICATED.** When housekeepers and others applying for a situation make use of the phrase "thoroughly domesticated," they little dream that it conveys the idea of their

being tamed into civilisation, as if they were at one time wild beasts. Of course what they mean to convey is that they are homely and domestic in reference to their character. The word domestic and not domesticated should be used.

**DON.** A Spanish word equivalent to Mr. in English language.

Don Quixote, for instance, means Mr. Quixote. At Cambridge and Oxford Universities the professors are "dons."

**DOOM.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *dom*, meaning judgment, whence "to doom" literally means "to form a judgment."

**DOPEY.** It is a vulgar substitute for sleepy or dull or thick-headed.

**DORP.** In South Africa every little township is called "dorp."

**DOSE, DOZE.** A dose is that which a physician prescribes, and a doze is asleep in which the patient falls.

**DOTTY.** Silly, cranky.

**DOUBT, HESITATE.** When you have a doubt in your mind about a thing, you naturally hesitate before you act. Hesitation is temporary, but when it becomes habitual, it is called vacillation.

**DOUR.** It is a Scotch word meaning obstinate or stern. "This afternoon the efforts were renewed, and at last, as stated, the dour nine deportees gave way."—*The Evening News*, 1914.

**DOUT (TO).** "To dout the candle" is to put it out, "dout" being a contraction of "do out." Similarly we have "dup the door" (which see) for "do up (fasten) the door," "doff the coat" for "do off (take off) the coat," and "don the cap" for "do on (put on) the cap."

**DOWDY.** It is used both as noun and adjective in the sense of shabbiness in dress. The fundamental idea contained in the word is that of sloth or torpor, and that of carelessness of dress or appearance is secondary.

**DOWN.** In the meaning of "to be awake to any move" "down" is synonymous with "up" which on the face of it appears paradoxical, "down" and "up" being quite opposite to each other. It also signifies suspicion, alarm, as "there is no down" i.e. all is quiet. As adverb, it means dejected, hard up, in disgrace, and in this sense it is found in various expressions such as "down in the mouth" (which see) meaning dejected; "down upon one's luck" or "down in one's luck" and "down on the bed-rock" meaning hard up, the last expression conveying the idea more of being in a penniless state than being merely hard up. "To be down on one" means to be constantly inimical towards one, the varied expression being "to be down on one like a ton of bricks." "Downed" means conquered, set upon, floored (which see), as "he was downed in the fight." "Down to the ground" means completely, as "that suits me down to the ground," similar expression being "right up to the handle." "Downy"

means a bed, and "to do the downy" means to keep in bed in the morning. As adjective "downy" means artful, cunning. A downy cove is a cunning fellow, a clever rogue, sometimes varied to "downy bird." "Down-hearted" literally the heart prostrated, hence without spirit or low-spirited. "Down town." To go down town is to go to the business part of the town. "Down-trod." It means despised, literally trodden under foot. "Down-fall." A heavy shower of rain, also applied to loss of social position. "Downpour." Very heavy shower of rain. "Downright." Literally it means from top to bottom, hence, thoroughly, as "downright honest," "downright shame" &c.

**DRAB.** In common parlance it means dull, monotonous and is a co-relative of "dull." As such it has become almost a recognised word. Shakespeare uses it as a substantive for a vulgar, low woman, and in this sense it is allied to "druff."

**DRAGOONS.** Cavalry trained to act both on horseback and on foot. The name arose from dragons (short-barrelled firearms which spouted out fire like the fabulous beast dragon) which they carried.

**DRAPE.** It comes from the French *drap* meaning cloth, and hence the word draper which means one who deals in cloth.

**DRAUGHT.** It literally means what is drawn or dragged. "A draught of water" means so much as is drawn down the throat at once. "A draught of fishes" means the number of fishes which is taken at one drag of the net.

**DRAW.** Like "do" the word "draw" is used in various senses. As noun, it means (a) an attraction, said of an article, play, preacher, when it or he attracts the public and succeeds; (b) an undecided contest, and in this sense it is an abbreviation of "drawn game." As verb, it means (a) to attract public attention, (b) to steal, a "to draw a wipe" in thieves' slang means to steal a handkerchief, and (c) to ease of money, as "I drew him for a hundred pounds." In sporting parlance the verb "draw" is used with an ellipsis of "trigger," as, "I drew on it as it rose before me." "Draw it mild" figuratively means "don't exaggerate," the metaphor being taken from the phraseology of the public-house where customers desire their beer to be "drawn mild." The opposite to this is "come it strong"! In pugilistic sense "to draw the cork" is to make the nose bleed. In common parlance "to draw out" is to elicit information from a person, the same as "to pump out." Gypsies use the expression "to draw the planet" for "to tell one's fortune." A "drawing" is a water-colour picture. "To draw blanks" means to fail or be disappointed, the allusion being to "drawing blank" in a lottery. "Draw boy" is the tradesman's bait. Superior wares are marked at a low price and displayed in the window not necessarily for sale, but for inviting customers. The

*Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant* by Barrere and Leland says that this trick proves expensive to the tradesman, when some obstinate customer insists on possessing the very piece or article thus marked and displayed in the window. But it may be pointed out that the dictionary is wrong, as without further evidence of the tradesman's intention to offer that particular item for sale, the persistent customer would fail in an action against the tradesman, if the tradesman declined to sell the article in question. The law is that mere intimation of readiness to do business, such as ticketing wares in the window, is no contract at all.

**DREE YOUR WEIRD.** It literally means bear your fate, the Scotch word dree meaning to bear, and weird meaning fate. Thus the expression means to put up with what the fates give you.

**DRESS CIRCLE (THE).** That part of the theatre which is set apart for those who go there in evening dress.

**DRIVE.** As noun it means a blow, as "to let drive at one." Shakespeare says:—"Four rogues in buckram let drive at me." In racing phraseology "to drive a horse" is to urge a horse on with whip and spur. In tradesmen's phraseology "drive" is used in speaking of business, as "he is driving a roaring trade" *i.e.* he is doing remarkably well in business. Hence, in common usage it means to succeed in a bargain, as "to drive a bargain" is to make the best terms one can, and hence, succeed in it. "To drive at" is to aim at, as, "what are you driving at?" This is a very common colloquial phrase which denotes that to the person using it the meaning of what the other says or argues is not quite evident.

**DRONE (A).** Drones usually<sup>1</sup> live on the honey collected by bees, because they are lazy. Hence figuratively a sluggard is called a drone.

**DROP.** To relinquish, abandon, *e.g.* to drop an acquaintance. "Drop it!" means cease, leave off. "To have a drop in the eye," is to be slightly drunk. Swift in his "polite conversation" writes:—"O faith, Colonel, you must own you had a drop in your eye, for when I left you you were half seas over." "To drop the main Toby" means to turn out of the main road, drop, as in this phrase, is often used in the sense of "to turn aside." "To drop a man" is to knock him down; "to drop into a person" is to thrash him; and "to drop on one" is to accuse one without any warning. "To drop in" is colloquial for "to make a casual call on someone," as "drop in this afternoon, if you happen to pass this way." "Drop me or drop me down" means "put me or put me down" and this expression is used by a passenger to an omnibus conductor, asking the latter to put him down at the place at which he wants to alight. "Drop

in" and "drop me down" are expressions commonly used in England. "To drop off" means to fall away slowly, as friends drop off in adversity. It also means to fall asleep. "To drop a courtesy" means to bow to one in acknowledgment. "To take a drop too much" means to get intoxicated, and "to take one's drops" is to take spirits in private.

**DROPSY.** It is an abbreviation of hydropsy, from *hydor* meaning water.

**DRUM.** Probably this word is a corrupted form of the Dutch word *drom* meaning a crowd, and at one time it signified an evening party because of the room being crowded with people. (See kettle-drum.)

**DRUMMER.** Americans call a commercial traveller a drummer, and similarly travelling in search of business "drumming."

**DRUNK.** "Drunk as blazes." It is a vulgar expression and a corruption of "drunk as blaizers." Those who took part in celebrating the festival of Bishop Blaize, the patron saint of Wool-commerce, did so with great rejoicings, merriment and revelry, and were called blaizers. Naturally on that occasion they drank a great deal, and hence the expression. Dr. Brewer in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* says that in this expression blazes means the devil. "Drunk as Chloe." A lady by that name was notorious for her drinking habits of which Mathew Prior makes mention in his poems, and in this phrase there is a reference to her.

**DRY.** "Dry up" (American). An equivalent for "shut up" (which see), or "cork up your whisky bottle" meaning hold your tongue. "As dry as esparto." The dry tough grass which grows in the South of Spain is called the esparto grass, and the expression means "very dry."

**DRYASDUST.** A dryasdust is a plodding author, very learned but very prosy and dull. So called after Reverend Dr. Dryasdust.

**DUCK.** The word "duck" means to dive, and the bird duck is so called from the habit of diving. "Duck of a child." A nice plump child is so called. "Dying duck in a thunder-storm." Contemptuously applied to a person who makes too much of a little trouble by putting on a woe-begone appearance, as if the world had nothing more to offer him.

**DUENNA.** In Spain or Portugal an elderly lady who takes a charge of young ladies, being partly a governess and partly a companion, is so called.

**DUFFER.** It now means a slow-witted fellow who can be cheated, but at one time it meant a sharp-witted fellow who cheated others. To duff meant to cheat. A duffer was one who palmed off inferior goods as great bargains pretending that they were smuggled goods. Duffer literally means

deaf, and it is worthy of note that in most of its Indo-European forms the word "deaf" is synonymous with stupid. Some think that in its sense of stupid it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *daffe* which means a fool, though Skeat does not connect it with that word.

**DULL.** Whether applied to persons or things, this word conveys the radical idea of a stoppage of the necessary faculties or powers. A dull knife is one that has lost its sharp edge or power, and hence it does not cut. A dull pain is one that is wanting in its power to make the body feel it. A dull person is one whose mental faculties are not quick enough to apprehend, and hence, a dull person is a stupid person.

**DUMPS.** There runs a fable that there was in Egypt a king called Dumps, who built a pyramid and died melancholy, and hence we have the expression "to be in the dumps," meaning to be out of spirits. But it seems more reasonable that the word comes from the Dutch *dompig*, dull, low, misty.

**DUNCE.** Duns Scotus who lived in the thirteenth century strongly opposed new theology at that time and also decried the new learning and the classics, and hence his adherents were called "Dunsers." The word "dunce" was generally adopted to mean a person opposed to progress and learning. Its proper derivation, however, seems to be the Lowland Scotch "donsie" meaning stupid or obstinate.

**DUNDERHEAD.** "Dunder" is the dregs of wine, hence a "dunderhead" means a person who has lost all spirit and become stupid.

**DUNGEON.** Originally, the principal building of a fortress, which from its position had the command of the rest, was called "dungeon." But now the word dungeon has been employed to signify such an underground prison as was formerly placed in the strongest part of a fort or fortress.

**DUP THE DOOR.** This is a common phrase in country places, being a contraction of the words "do up the door," (fasten the door).

**DUST.** It is a generic for money, as in the phrase "down with the dust!" i.e. put down the money. Dean Swift used this expression in one of his sermons. "To raise a dust" means "to kick up a row" (which see). "To have dust in the eyes" means to be sleepy, and this is said mainly of children. "To throw dust in the eyes" means to mislead. "To bite the dust" is to be ashamed. As verb, it means to beat, as "to dust one's jacket." (See lace one's jacket.) Who has not heard of "dust to dust," from which we come and to which we go. "Not so dusty" is equivalent to "not so bad" (which see). When a person suggests something which meets with your approval, you answer him with, "that's not half so dusty."

**DUTCH.** "Dutch auction." A Dutch Auction is a sale in which the auctioneer puts the high price on an article, and reduces it by degrees until he finds someone to close with him. "Dutch courage." False and stimulated courage. During the wars between the Dutch and the English in the reign of Charles the Second the former fought so stubbornly that the English soldiers attributed their (Dutch) pluck to the free indulgence in alcohol.

**DUTY.** This word is the same as *duete* meaning duty, which is an abstract formed from the past participle of French *devoir*, and this latter verb has also brought into the English language the verb endeavour.

**DWARF.** Originally a dwarf, which now means a person of unusually small stature, meant a crooked or deformed person.

## E.

**EAGER.** At one time this word meant sharp or keen. Shakespeare has it in *Hamlet* in the line "It is a nipping and an eager air."

**EARN.** This comes from old Teutonic word for harvest, implying to reap the fruit of one's labour. In Dutch the word for harvest is *erue*, and *eruen*, to reap. In German *ernte* means harvest; in Bavarian *arn* is harvest, and *arnen* signifies both to reap and to earn wages.

**EARWIG.** According to some people this insect is so called because it creeps in the ear. Others believe that it is so called because of its resemblance to the human ear in shape. The Anglo-Saxon word is *eor-wiega* (*eor*, an ear, and *wiega*, derived from *wegan*, meaning to carry).

**EARWIGGING.** A rebuke in private is "earwiggling," wiggling being more public.

**EASE.** From "ease" we get the word disease. "Ease her." It is the command given by the captain when he wants to slack the speed of a steamer. "Ill at ease." Uneasy; restless. "Stand at ease." A command given to soldiers to rest their legs for a time.

**EASEL.** This word is derived from the German *esel* which literally means an ass. The easel is so called because of the burden it bears, viz., the picture that stands on it.

**EAT.** "To eat one's terms." To prepare for the Bar, the allusion being to the six dinners a student has to take every term (there being four terms in the year) in the Hall of his Inn. "To eat one's words." To withdraw one's statement, to own a lie. "To eat one's hat." (See hat.) "To eat the humble pie." To accept a subordinate and humiliating position under force of circumstances. Humble is a cor-



ruption of the word umbles or numbles, the coarser parts of a deer, which were formerly given to the lower hunt-servants.

**EAVESDROPPER.** In the old Saxon times no landowner could cultivate land or build on it within a certain fixed boundary. The strip thus left was called the "eaves-drip." The person who stood in the "eaves-drip" to listen unnoticed to any conversation was called an "eaves-dripper" or "eaves-dropper," which is its present meaning.

**ECCE HOMO.** This Latin phrase literally means "behold the man," from the words of Pilate, John xix, 5, and is generally applied to a picture of the Saviour wearing crown of thorns.

**ECHO.** In Greek mythology "Echo" was a beautiful woman who fell deeply in love with Narcissus, who despised her love. Echo pined and pined away until nothing of her was left but her voice, which resounded (echoed) through the vales.

**ÉCLAT.** French word adopted into the English language, signifying "striking effect," "brilliancy."

**ECONOMY.** In the sense of domestic frugality or household management this word is derived from the Greek *oikos*, a house, and *nomos*, a law, literally meaning "house-law." But it is also used in the wider sense of conduct or arrangement of a system such as "Social Economy," and "Political Economy." "Economic laws." The natural laws which control trade, labour, capital, and the production and circulation of commodities.

**ECSTASY.** This word comes from the Greek *ek* meaning out, and *statis* meaning a standing. It was a general belief amongst the Greeks that whenever the soul saw a vision, it actually left the body and saw the vision only "in the spirit." So "to be in ecstasy" literally means to be "in the spirit," that is, to be in raptures. This word is now loosely applied for paroxysms of love, hate, and fear.

**EDGE.** "Edge on (or egg on)." This is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon word *eggian*, which literally means to spur on or to prick. We use it in the sense of to incite. "To take the edge off (a thing or person or idea)." To become acquainted with, enjoy to satiety. Shakespeare uses it in *Hamlet*.

**EDIFY.** This comes from the Latin *edē* meaning a building, and to edify means to build up. From the same root we have "edifico" meaning a building.

**EDUCATION.** The common notion that this word is derived from the Latin *educō*, "draw out," is an erroneous one. As a matter of fact, the Romans coupled the word *duco* meaning to lead, with *ex* meaning out or up, and so this compound word *educō* was used in the sense of "leading," and particularly "bringing up" of anything from its imma-

ture to a matured state, such as "bringing up" from the egg to the chicken. Then as this word *educō* came to be used in many other senses, it took the derivative noun *educatio* meaning training of children.

**EFFENDI.** This Turkish title which is added after the name is almost equivalent to the English "esquire" and the French "monsieur." It is a civil title of respect in contradistinction to the military title of Aga.

**EFFIGY.** The original meaning of the word was "the features" and it is used in that sense in the following account of the disinterment of the body of Bishop Braybrooke:—"On the right side of ye cheek there was flesh and hair visible, enough to give some notice of his effigy."

**EGG.** "To egg on." To incite. In this sense egg is connected with edge. "A bad egg." A worthless fellow. "As sure as eggs is eggs." Certainly; assuredly. Some think it is a corruption of "as sure as x is x."

**EGLANTINE.** The true meaning of the word is a prickly sweet-briar, Milton was mistaken in using it to signify the honeysuckle.

**EGOISM, EGOTISM.** Both come from the Latin *ego*, I, but they are not synonyms. In ethics egoism is used to denote selfishness, and is opposed to Altruism (which see). Egotism is used in the sense of self-conceit, practice of talking about oneself.

**ELBOW.** "Elbow grease." Sweating through manual labour, and, hence, hard work, labour or industry. "A knight of the elbow." A gambler. Probably it has a reference to the player fixing his elbow on the table, while he is intent upon the game. "To elbow one's way." To push one's way through a crowd. "Up to one's elbow." Very busy with or full of work and it is always used in connection with work. A similar expression is "up to one's eyes in work." "Out at elbows." The allusion is to a coat that has worn out at the elbows and consequently become very shabby. As the metaphor is taken from the coat of a man, it should be applied to men only in that sense. Metaphorically, it means, short of money, when applied to persons, and stale, when applied to things. Thus, a man is out at elbows, when he is hard up, and a theatrical play is said to be worn out at elbows when it has been acted too often. McMordie in his book of *English Idioms and How to Use Them* puts the definite article the before elbows and makes the phrase "out at the elbows" (p. 150) whereas the phrase is "out at elbows." "Elbow room." Literally, a room in which to move easily, hence, sufficient space for the work in hand or sufficient opportunity for freedom of action. Give him elbow room and see how far he succeeds.

**ELDER, ELDEST; OLDER, OLDEST.** Elder and eldest are applied to persons and as a rule to the members of a family; older and oldest are used both of persons and things.

**EL DORADO.** (Spanish.) An imaginary land of untold wealth and perfect bliss.

**ELECTRICITY.** This word comes from electron, amber, from which electricity was discovered.

**ELECTRIFIED.** It has two meanings (*a*) excited with liquor, *i.e.* moderately drunk and (*b*) violently startled. A synonym for "electrified" in its first sense is "elevated."

**ELEGANT, PLEASANT.** Elegant refers to grace, taste or refinement. We can say "an elegant person" or an "elegant gown," but it would not be right to say "an elegant view." It is quite right to say "pleasant weather."

**ELEPHANT.** "To have seen the elephant." (American.) To have had full experience of life, or of a certain subject or object, and thus not being a greenhorn. It is supposed to be a metaphor taken from the travelling menageries where the elephant is invariably the thing worth seeing in the exhibition. There is also an old ballad which tells of a farmer who, while driving along the highway, met with a showman's elephant which not only knocked him over but destroyed his eggs and spilt his milk, and the poor farmer sought consolation in the reflection that he had at least "seen the elephant."

**ELEVATOR.** The Americans use the word "elevator" for "lift." In the *London Builder* of September 10th, 1859, "elevator" is described as "a carriage that will move from the top to the bottom of the building, and from the bottom to the top. It will be forced upwards by the application of steam power, and the descent will be regulated by the resistance of hydraulic power."

**ELIA.** A *nom de plume* under which Charles Lamb contributed his admirable Essays to the *London Magazine* between 1820 and 1825. Elia was the name of a fellow-clerk of the author's at the South Sea House. This signature was prefixed to the first essay which was on the "Old South Sea House," and was afterwards used by the editor of the *London Magazine* to distinguish Charles Lamb's articles, and finally adopted by the author himself.

**ELIMINATE.** The proper meaning of the word is to "throw out" and to "reject." It is a mistake to use it in the sense of selecting a thing with a view to retain it.

**ELIXIR OF LIFE.** A cure for all human ailments with a view to prolong life on earth. Although it was never found, it used to be the dream of all alchemists.

**ELOCUTION, ORATORY.** Elocution comes from the Latin *elocutio*, speaking out, and is the art of effective speaking. Oratory (which see) is a wider term, of which elocution is

a branch, as it takes account not only of effective speaking but of the matter spoken as well.

**ELOPE.** It is cognate with leap.

**ELSE.** This word is allied to alien.

**EMBER DAYS.** Three days that recur at each of the four seasons of the year as days of fasting and prayer. It is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *ymb*, about, and *ryne*, a course or running, and is applied to the days of fasting and prayer as they come round at certain set seasons in the year.

**EMBEZZLE.** At one time this word did not hint at dishonesty which it now implies. Skeat is of opinion that in the sixteenth century this word was influenced by a supposed etymology from *imbecill*, to weaken, an obsolete verb formed from the adjective *imbecile*.

**EMERALD ISLE.** Ireland. This term was first applied to Ireland by Dr. Drennan in his poem called "Erin." Ireland is so called because of its bright and green verdure.

**EMERGE, IMMERGE.** To emerge means to come out of; and to immerge is to plunge into anything, and hence to disappear. The light emerges from the sun, and some heavenly bodies immerge in the light of the sun.

**EMIGRATE, IMMIGRATE.** "A person emigrates from one country, and immigrates into another. Hence, an emigrant is a person leaving his native land, and an immigrant is one who has arrived at the country of his adoption."

**EMINENT, IMMINENT.** Eminent means distinguished, as "an eminent Statesman"; imminent means impending or hanging over in a threatening manner, as "an imminent danger."

**EMPEROR.** "Drunk as an emperor." An intensified form of "drunk as a lord" as much as to say ten times as drunk as a lord.

**ENCROACHES, INTRENCHMENT.** Encroaches includes not only intrenchment but also other forms of pushing our way where we have no business.

**END.** "To begin at the wrong end." To begin to do a thing in an unsystematic manner. The phrase is generally used in reference to education or an educational system, for instance, teaching grammar to little children before they are taught words is to begin their education at the wrong end. The educational system in India began at the wrong end. The allusion is to unwinding at the wrong end the wound threaded round a cord and consequently being unable to unwind it. "To come to the end of one's tether." To come to the end of one's resources; to do all that one has ability to do. The allusion is to an animal tied to a tether (rope) so that it can graze only as far as the tether can be

carried out. "No end of a fellow." He is no end of a fellow means he is a grand nice fellow.

**ENDEAVOUR, ESSAY.** Endeavour carries with it as a rule the sense of obligation or duty on the part of the doer. To endeavour is to try with serious effort. An essay is simply an attempt to solve a question or problem by discussing it. Essays are in reality small detached pieces in which the writer sets forth his general thoughts which can be amplified.

**ENDORSE (OR INDORSE).** It comes from the Latin *in*, *in*, and *dorsum*, the back. It originally meant something carried on the back. Milton says in "Paradise Lost": "Elephants endorsed with the sinews of air." A signature on the back of a cheque is an endorsement. The phrase "I endorse your views" literally means "I back you up in your views." It may be observed here that to endorse means to write upon the back, hence the expression "endorse on the back of" is pleonasm.

**ENDOWMENT.** This word was formerly used to mean money or other property settled upon a wife as a dowry. Now it is extended in its sense and is applied to money settled to the use of schools, churches, &c.

**ENEMY.** Slang for time, the common expression being "how goes the enemy?" or "what says the enemy?" Idlers naturally find time hanging heavy on their hands like an enemy, and hence the expression. To idlers it is that we also owe the expression "to kill the enemy" in the sense of "to kill time."

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE.** The history of the English language is divided into three periods, viz., Old English (also termed Anglo-Saxon), Middle English, and Modern English. Old English is the language spoken and written down to about 1150, and it was in this Southern dialect that King Alfred wrote his books on law just before 900. Not only the grammatical complexities which exist in Modern German, but indeed a little more, are to be traced in Alfred's English; and it is worth noting that in Old English there is not so much foreign influence as is to be seen in Modern English. Although the fact remains that Old English had incorporated a certain number of Latin words, especially those relating to institutions and rituals of the Church and to several things connected with Roman civilisation, it is of no little interest to note that the writers of Old English invariably turned to the native words themselves as a source of inspiration from which to draw equivalents which they used as technical terms for Christian theology. After knowing this, the reader need not be surprised to find a page even of Old English prose read more like a foreign than the native language of Englishmen. Middle English is the language spoken and written between 1150 and 1500, and it was in this language

that Chaucer, the father of English poetry, wrote his immortal verse. Modern English means the language of the last four centuries, commencing with the Elizabethan period.

**ENLIST (or INLIST).** To enlist as a soldier literally means to enrol one's name in the list of soldiers.

**ENNUI.** This word is borrowed from the French meaning mental weariness or languor of mind arising from lack of interest in what is going on. It does not mean fatigue in which sense some people erroneously use it.

**ENOUGH, ENOW.** Enow is now seldom used. At one time enough was used for quantity, and enow for numbers, for instance, "enough wheat," and "enow chairs." But now enough does duty for both words, and enow has become obsolete.

**EN ROUTE.** On the way, on the road or journey.

**ENTENTE CORDIALE.** This French phrase means friendly feeling or understanding, and it occurs frequently in Queen Victoria's letters about French relationship nearly 60 years ago. But ask an average Englishman and he will tell you that this phrase is not so old as that and that it only dates from the early visits of the late King Edward VII. to France some ten or eleven years ago.

**ENTHUSE.** This word originated with journalism and is characterised as slang, used in the sense of "manifest enthusiasm or delight."

**ENTHUSIASM.** This is derived from the Greek *en*, in, and *theos*, God, and literally means inspiration. In the eighteenth century, however, this term was regularly applied to fanaticism. It may be observed that fanatic is a Latin equivalent for "enthusiastic." "Fanatic" literally means "belonging to the fane"; then it came to mean "inspired by the divinity."

**ENVOY.** It has two meanings (a) a diplomatic minister of the second order, *i.e.*, ranking below ambassador, and (b) author's parting words, especially short stanza concluding certain archaic forms of poem. In both senses it comes from the old French *envoyer* meaning to send (*en voie*, on the way).

**EPIDEMIC, ENDEMIC.** The former comes from the Greek *epi* meaning upon, and *demos* meaning people, and is said of diseases which affect a great number of people in community, for instance, plague. The latter comes from the Greek *en* meaning into, and *demos* meaning people, and is applied to diseases to which the inhabitants of a particular place are peculiarly subject, for instance, goitre in Gilgit. But if a disease prevails over a large region of the globe at the same time, it is said to be pandemic, for instance, cholera has at times been widely distributed over some parts of Europe and Asia at the same time.

**EPIGRAM.** It was originally an inscription on some object, usually a statue or tomb. Later on the form embodied moral or lyrical sentiments, descriptions or gibes. This branch of poetry was successfully cultivated by the Greeks down to the Byzantine Age, and the best Greek epigrams are unmatched in their own field.

**EPOCH.** Although this word is used in the sense of "era," it really means the end of one era and the beginning of the next. It comes from the Greek *epecho*, meaning to rein in, and so to break off suddenly.

**EQUANIMITY OF MIND.** Equanimity means "evenness" of mind" and therefore, the phrase, "equanimity of mind" is a pleonasm.

**EQUIVOCAL.** It comes from the Latin *aequus*, equal, and *vox*, genitive, *vocis*, a word. A word which can be interpreted in two ways is called an equivocal word.

**ERA.** This word was formerly spelt *era*. There are two suggestions as to the origin of this word. The one is that it is derived from A.E.R.A., the initial abbreviations of *Annus erat Augusti*, which words were employed by the Spaniards to signify the year in which their country came under the domination and rule of Emperor Augustus, and they adopted the Roman Calendar. The other is that it comes from the Latin *acra*, the plural of *aes*, which word originally meant copper but was afterwards used to denote items of calculation. "It differs from epoch in being a point of time fixed by some nation or denomination of men; epoch is a point fixed by historians and chronologists."

**ERADICATE.** It comes from the Latin *e*, from, and *radix*, a root. So literally it means to pull up by the root.

**ERRANT.** This is abbreviated from itinerant and so a knight-errant is an itinerant, that is, a travelling knight. Cervantes first applied it to his hero "Don Quixote."

**ERROR.** It comes from the Latin *erro* meaning to wander. Ben Jonson describes a voyage as an error by sea.

**ERUPTION, IRRUPTION.** An eruption is something that bursts forth, whereas an irruption is a sudden invasion. Eruptions on the face are the pimples on the face. A fiery speaker may raise the spirit of irruption among his listeners.

**ESCAPE, ELUDE.** To escape is merely to succeed in avoiding danger; to elude is to avoid danger by escaping by artful means.

**ESCURIAL.** The country palace of the Spanish Sovereigns. So called as it is built among the rocks, the word *escorial*, as the word was properly spelt signifies "among the rocks." It is one of the most magnificent structures in Europe.

**ESQUIRE.** It comes from the Latin *scutifer* meaning a shield-bearer, hence the word originally meant a shield-bearer. It is now a legally recognised title of rank.

**ESTUARY.** It comes from the Latin *aestuo* meaning to boil, and the mouth of a river is called estuary because the water boils there.

**ET CETERA.** This Latin phrase literally means "and the other things" and as *cetera* is a neuter plural, it would be wrong to apply it to persons, as newspaper reporters and some writers often do.

**ETIQUETTE.** The usages of polite society. Eliezer Edwards in *Words, Facts, and Phrases* says:— "This word, which means simply a label or ticket, received its present figurative signification from the fact that an old Scotch gardener, who laid out the grounds at Versailles for Louis XIV., being much annoyed at the courtiers walking over his newly made grounds, at length had labels placed to indicate where they might pass. At first these labels were not attended to; but a hint from high quarters that in future the walks of the courtiers must be within the "etiquettes" was promptly attended to, and to "keep within the etiquettes" became the correct thing. The meaning of the phrase was afterwards widened, and is now universally understood. This is a very good story and perhaps a capital guess, but the word etiquette comes from a French word meaning a ticket or a little note, and refers to the old custom of handing to visitors on ceremonial occasions a card of instructions to be observed by them in address and behaviour. But now everybody who is anybody is supposed to know these ordinary rules of etiquette.

**EUPHEMISM.** This is a term which denotes the art of putting offensive matters in an agreeable manner. For instance "he breathed his last" for "he died" is a euphemism. It comes from the Greek *eu*, well, and *phemi*, I say.

**EURASIAN.** This word is a compound of "European" and "Asian," and is applied to a person of mixed European and Asiatic parentage.

**EVACUATE, VACATE.** Evacuate means to make empty, and not to go away. So when a garrison, stationed at one place, goes away, evacuation is merely the result of their going away. To vacate implies surrender by removal.

**EVAPORATE.** "To evaporate" means to disappear, vanish, run away, and it should not be confused with "to spirit away" which is to cause to disappear. Children are often spirited away by kidnappers.

**EVENTUATE.** This word is commonly used for "happen." It originally meant "to culminate in some result," as, for instance, his extravagance eventuated in the total loss of his property. But now it also means "to be the issue of."

**EVERLASTING, ETERNAL.** That which is everlasting is without end only, whereas that which is eternal is without beginning or end.



**EVERY.** "Every confidence." The use of the adjective *every* before confidence is objected to on the ground that confidence being used as a mass-noun, cannot, strictly speaking, allow of an adjective with a numerical designation, and those who thus object prefer the expression "implicit confidence." It should be noted, however, that "every confidence" is elliptical of "every sort of confidence" which conveys the same sense as "implicit confidence."

**EVOLUTION.** "Evolution is, of course, a modern word in English; it appeared first in a military sense in the seventeenth century, and acquired its present meaning and its immense development from the words of Darwin and Herbert Spencer in the nineteenth century. Indeed it is not too much to say that although the middle ages had words like regeneration and amendment with reference to the notion of personal conduct and its reform, there were at that time no general terms to express the ideas of continuous improvement, of advance to better and better conditions. The reason that there were no such terms is of course that they were not needed. The idea of progress may have visited the thoughts of a few lonely philosophers, but it obtained no general acceptance, and found no expression in the language. The social consciousness was not favourable to it, being dominated as it was by the religious belief in the degeneracy of a world fallen from grace, and fated to worse deterioration before its sudden end, which might come at any time."—Smith, *The English Language*.

**EX'S.** This is a colloquial abbreviation of "expenses."

**EXAGGERATE.** This comes from the Latin *agger* meaning a heap, and it originally signified to heap or to pile up. The present meaning of the word still retains the idea of piling up. We also say colloquially "That is right, old man, go on, pile it on" meaning go on exaggerating.

**EXAM.** Short for examination.

**EX CATHEDRA.** This Latin phrase means "from the chair" and it is applied to the opinions of a person who speaks with the authority of a professor or a learned man. It is used both as adjective and adverb.

**EXCELSIOR.** This word is derived from the Latin, and is the comparative degree of the adjective *excelsus*, high, lofty. Its meaning, therefore, is "still higher," and in Longfellow's beautiful poem, it is adopted as the motto of a genius whose world-experience is thus illustrated.—Edward, Shelton, *The Historical Finger-post*.

**EXCEPT, UNLESS.** Except should not be used for unless. Always say "you cannot judge of a thing unless you know it" and not "except you know it." I have heard Englishmen use "when" for "till," for instance, "expect me when you see me," which is wrong. The correct sentence ought

to be "expect me till you see me." You wait for a person till he arrives and until that time you are expecting him. But when he has arrived, you don't wait for him any more, and therefore your expecting him ceases.

**EXCEPTING.** The use of "excepting" for "except" is not desirable, when there is no need for it. "I care for no one except my friend," not "excepting." We use the longer expression "not even excepting" as for instance, "we all have our faults, not even excepting the best ones."

**EXCEPTION.** "Exception proves the rule." In this phrase "prove" is used in its original sense of "to test." "To take exception." To find fault with.

**EXCHANGE FOR, EXCHANGE WITH.** You exchange with a person and you exchange for a thing. If you like, I will exchange my book with you. If you like, I will exchange my book for yours. Exchange is always mutual.

**EXCHEQUER.** This Court was so called because of the "checkered" cloth which covered the table at which its business was formerly transacted. The word "checker" comes from the old French *eschiquier*, meaning a chess board.

**EXCITE, INCITE.** To excite is to produce great stir of feeling; to incite is to rouse to a particular action, and is stronger than "excite."

**EXEAT.** A school and college term meaning "permission for temporary absence."

**EXECUTOR.** An executor in law is one who administers an estate. He derives his title solely from the will.

**EXEGESIS.** A Greek term meaning the exposition of any writing. But it is now almost exclusively used of the interpretation of Scripture.

**EXHIBITION.** This word is still used in the sense of an allowance of money in the Universities. We have the phrase "to gain an Exhibition" meaning to gain an annual scholarship. Shakespeare uses it in this sense in "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "King Lear" and "Othello."

**EX HYPOTHESI.** According to what is assumed or supposed.

**EXISTENCE, LIFE.** Existence itself is life, as that which keeps up existence is that which keeps up life. Hence the expression "existence of life" is a mere pleonasm. Crabb in "English Synonyms Explained" says:—"Existence is the property of all things in the universe; life, which is the inherent power of motion, is the particular property communicated by the Divine Being to some parts only of his creation: exist, therefore, is the general, and live the specific, term: whatever lives, exists according to a certain mode; but many things exist without living: when we wish to speak of things in their most abstract relation, we say

they exist; when we wish to characterise the form of existence, we say they live."

**EXIT.** It is a stage term meaning "he goes out," referring to the actor who leaves the stage after performing his part. At all the public places the exit door is that through which the public go out.

**EXODUS.** When a large number of natives leave their Motherland, there is an "exodus," and it should not be used in the sense of exit or departure.

**EX OFFICIO.** This Latin phrase means "by virtue of his office." For instance, "the deputy commissioner of a district in India is *ex officio* the President of the Municipal Committee."

**EXORBITANT.** It comes from the Latin *ex orbita* meaning out of the wheel-rut, hence extravagant.

**EXORCISM.** In the ancient church a certain class of persons believed that those who were afflicted with madness and epilepsy and other diseases were possessed by evil spirits. Forms of conjuration were pronounced over such persons and this was called exorcism, which meant driving away the devil.

**EX PARTE.** One-sided; partial, as an *ex parte* statement.

**EXPECT.** Expect always refers to the future, and, strictly speaking, should not be used in the sense of think or believe or suppose, although such use is common in England.

**EXPECTING.** A common expression for a woman in a family way. "When is she expecting?" means "when is she expecting to have child." This is by no means slang, but is a society term.

**EXPLODE.** This word in Latin meant to drive off an actor by clapping the hands. Then it came to mean to hoot off by hissing and by using noisy and abusive words. The sense of "driving out" is still retained in the phrase "the ball was exploded from the gun." The original sense has become so common that we still have it in the phrase "an exploded theory," which means a theory which though at one time established is blown up or blown to pieces by adverse arguments.

**EXPONENT.** It comes from the Latin *ex pono* meaning to expose or set forth. Hence an exponent is one who sets forth or explains the views of another.

**EX POST FACTO.** Acting retrospectively, as *ex post facto* law, a law made after the offence has been committed to punish a crime.

**EX PROFESSO.** Expressly, avowedly.

**EXTANT.** This word is probably an abbreviated form of "existent." A thing not in existence is not extant.

**EXTREME.** "Extremes meet." The best way to bring out the exact significance of this proverb is by giving an illustration. One may be overcome with extreme joy and shed tears of joy and the same person may be suddenly overwhelmed with grief and shed tears of grief. Thus the two extremes of joy and grief meet, as it were in tears. Coleridge in his "Aid to Reflection" says :—"Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as so true, that they lose all the power of truths, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors."

**EXTRICATE.** Latin *ex*, out of, and *tricae*, fetters. "Tricae" are the hairs, etc., tied round the feet of birds to prevent their wandering. To extricate is "to get out of these *tricae* or meshes."—Dr. Brewer.

**EXULT AT, EXULT OVER.** One exults at one's own or a friend's success, while exults over an enemy's discomfiture or defeat.

**EYE.** "My eye." An exclamation of astonishment. "The eyes of Greece." Athens. "Eye-sore." Something that is offensive to the sight. "To make eyes at." To look at amorously. A similar expression which has quite recently come into use is "to give the glad eye" (see glad eye). "To see eye to eye." This expression "to see eye to eye" with another person as now used in English is itself a perversion of a Hebrew idiom which was used of two persons seeing one another eye to eye, or, as we now say, face to face. But the modern idiom is used of two persons who take the same view of any matter.—G. C. Whitworth, *Indian English*. This phrase is mostly used in religious circles. "I have been up to my eyes in work." I have been working very hard.

**EYRE.** "Justices in Eyre." This is a corruption of "Justices in itinere."

## F.

**F.O.B.** It stands for "free on board," and is a mercantile term. It means that the price quoted for any article includes carriage and all other charges until that article is actually shipped.

**FABIAN POLICY.** Fabius Maximus, a Roman General, declined to fight in the open field, but persisted in harassing the enemy by marches and counter-marches, and thus gained a victory. Hence a Fabian policy is one in which matters are delayed and temporised with a view to gain the final advantage.

**FACE.** "A brazen face." An impertinent look, and hence, a brazen-faced person is an impudent person. "To draw or

pull a long face." To look dissatisfied and consequently melancholy. The allusion is to the mouth being drawn down at the corners and the face elongated, when one looks sad. "To face it out." To stand one's ground resolutely, even when one knows that one is at fault. Shakespeare says:—"She thinks with oaths to face the matter out" *i.e.* she thinks that by taking solemn oaths she will make others believe in her innocence. "To put a good face on the matter." To make the best of a bad matter by bearing it up courageously. "To set one's face against." To oppose in a determined manner. From the very first the father set his face against his daughter's choice. "Shame-faced." Having shame expressed in the face.

**FACER.** A blow in the face. In Ireland it signifies a dram.

**FACILE.** It comes from *facere*, to do. Hence facility means ease in performing, and refers more to mental work than ease. *Facile* is borrowed from the French. *Habile* is a similar word not yet adopted into English language, but it is to be hoped that this word shall soon find its way into the language. From *facile* we have facility and faculty, the latter meaning facility to do. It should be noted that in the law of Scotland, the term "facility" is used to denote a condition of mental weakness short of idiocy.

**FACSIMILE.** It comes from the Latin *factum* meaning made, and *simile* meaning like. Hence an exact copy, as of handwriting.

**FACTOTUM.** It comes from the Latin *facere*, to do, and *totum*, everything, and hence it means to do everything required. A factotum is one who does all sorts of services for one's master. The term should not be confused with "Jack of all trades."

**FADE AWAY.** This slang phrase which is used in the sense of "disappear" or "vanish mysteriously" appears in Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" and Thackeray is supposed to be the author of it. This phrase is also used in the sense of "to pass away gradually, die out," and Macaulay so uses it in his "History of England":—"Religious animosity would of itself fade away."

**FAG.** It is a school slang for a junior student who performs a servant's offices to a senior student, particularly at Eton. Grosse thinks that "fagged out" is derived from this. It is also slangily used for a cigarette, as "give me a fag" means give me a cigarette.

**FAGGING.** Fagging is a usage prevalent in the public schools of England, by virtue of which senior boys can exact a variety of services (such as carrying messages, stoking fire, stopping the tennis balls) from the junior boys. Fagging is referred to in "Tom Brown's School-days." It has its advantages as well as disadvantages. It is true that it makes

the juniors docile, but it is equally true that the seniors in most cases exercise this privilege rather capriciously and thus harass or humiliate the juniors.

**FAGGOT.** It properly means a bundle of sticks or twigs bound together as fuel. Figuratively it is a term of opprobrium applied to a woman shabbily dressed, who is compared to a bundle of sticks loosely put together. "Fag-end of a thing" means the remaining part, the refuse. Perhaps it is connected with faggot. "Faggot-briefs." Bundles of worthless papers sometimes carried by "briefless barristers" to simulate briefs. "Faggot-vote." A vote secured by transferring sufficient property to an unqualified person.

**FAIN.** Originally the word simply meant "glad" as in the phrase "I am fain" meaning I am glad or happy. Now this word conveys with it the idea of some sort of compulsion. Shakespeare uses this word in the latter sense in *Merry Wives of Windsor* where he makes Falstaff say "I was fain to shuffle and to hedge." Even now this word is used in its original sense in such a phrase as "I would fain do it for you, if I could."

**FAINT, FEINT, FEIGN.** All these come from the French *feindre* which is derived from the Latin *•fingo*, shape. Faint means swoon; feint denotes pretence; to feign is "to make a false show of, or pretend."

**FAIR.** In its sense of holiday this word is allied to feast. "The fair sex." An equivalent for women. It is a colloquial expression, and should not be used freely in serious literature as it is often done, because there is a slight savour of lightness about this expression. "Fair and square." Honest, just. All throughout his conduct he has been fair and square. It is also used in an adverbial sense, as "he treated me fair and square." "Fair fall you!" May good befall you. "One's fair fame." One's unblemished reputation. "Fair play is a jewel." Just as a jewel is an ornament of beauty and value, fair play is a thing of honour and a jewel in the crown of a player.

**FAIRY.** It comes from the Persian *peri*. The Arabians adopted this word, but as there is no p in their alphabet it became *feri*, and then it (*feri*) received the broader English sound fairy.

**FAKE.** A fake really means a thing that is palmed off on others with the intention of deceiving. It appears to have been derived from *facere* meaning to make, and it is very often used to mean "to patch up" or "to make serviceable for the time." Amongst the thieves the slang expression is "fake away, there is no down," which means go on, there is nobody looking. "A newspaper fake" is a common expression in England, and it means an invented story on the part of the newspaper.

**FALL.** In America they use this word in the sense of autumn, and at one time in England this sense was also current. Dryden uses it in this sense. "Fall to." Slang for "commence eating." A similar expression is "slog in."

**FAMILY.** "A person of family." A well-born person or one of aristocratic birth.

**FANCY.** "Fancy free." Not in love. In *Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare uses this expression. "Fancy-sick." Love-sick. This also occurs in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. "He is her fancy man." He is the most favourite of all her male-friends.

**FARE.** The word fare as a noun comes from the Anglo-Saxon *fare* meaning a passage, and as a verb it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *farran* meaning to go or travel. This word always retains its original sense in such phrases as omnibus fare, cab-fare, etc., which means the money one has to pay for the journey or the passage which one covers. As a verb also it retains its original sense, as, for instance, how are you faring which literally means how are you progressing or getting on. Also in the phrase "farewell" the word fare literally means may you go: hence farewell means literally "may you go well."

**FARM.** This word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *ferom* meaning food or hospitality. Originally tenants held lands in consideration of supply of food to their landlords, instead of rent, and this was called the *ferme*. Then this supply of food was commuted into a money payment, which was called *ferme blanche*, meaning silver or white money. Still later the rent itself was called *ferme*, and then the land from which the rent accrual was called the *ferme* or farm.

**FARRAGO.** This is a Latin word which really means a mixed corn or fodder for cattle, and now we use it figuratively to denote a confused state of things or a muddle. Thus the original idea of mixing is still retained in the figurative sense of the word.

**FARRIER.** It comes from the Latin *ferrum* meaning iron. Hence the English word farrier means a blacksmith who shoes horses (with irons).

**FARTHER, FURTHER.** Farther means more far, and therefore it relates to distance, as, for instance, "you dare not come a step farther." Further implies addition, as, for instance, "I will pay further consideration to your suggestions."

**FASHIONS.** A certain disease of the horse was called by that name, and Petruchio is said to be infected with the fashions in *Taming of the Shrew*. Strange to say that although this disease has become a common one, horses are not subject to it.

**FAST.** The word "fast" signifies "immovable" and also "rapid in motion," as defined in dictionaries. It is not to be inferred from this that this one word in itself originally carried two meanings. "Fast" in its primary sense means "firm, immovable," and by an easy transition, this sense was developed into that of "unwavering persistence in movement." To run fast literally is to run without slackening or with persistent movement, and hence, rapidly. This sense, viz., that of rapidly is exemplified in the phrase "to live too fast" which, in other words, means to live too gay a life. A "fast man" is one who indulges in sensual vices or leads a life of debauchery, hence, a loose man. A "fast girl" is one who imitates the manners or habits of a man. The *Saturday Review* defines a fast girl as a woman who has lost her respect for men and for whom men have lost their respect

sometimes used for impudent or cheeky, as "don't you be so fast." Quite recently the word "fresh" has come to be used in the sense of cheeky or impudent. "Fast" is also synonymous with "hard up." As verb it means to abstain from food, or particular kinds of foods, especially for religious reasons. "Fast" properly means firm or steadfast, and the sense of steadfastness is retained in the use of the word as verb, as to abstain from means to be steadfast in abstaining.

**FAT.** (Thieves) Money. (Printers) Composition full of blank spaces for which a printer is paid at the same rate as pages fully printed. Hence fat has come to mean "work that pays well." (Theatrical) A good part. A part which affords the actor an opportunity of appearing to advantage is said to be "fat." (American) Profitable, rich, abundant, as a "fat lot," a "fat thing," which is very profitable. In England too it is used in this sense. (Princeton College) Remittances (or allowance) of money to students. "To cut it fat." To exaggerate, to assume undue importance. "All the fat is in the fire." It means it is all over or up with a person or thing, and is said of failures, disappointments. A similar but recent equivalent is "Then the band played." (Which see.)

**FATA MORGANA.** Kind of mirage seen especially in Strait of Messina. Fata were figures rather than witches in Mediæval romance. The Fata Morgana, in Torso, were the three daughters of Morgana, namely, Morgannetta, Nivetta, and Carvilja.

**FATES.** Three Greek Goddesses who determine course of human life. Clotho held the distaff; Lachesis turned the spindle; and Atropos cut the thread with the fatal shears. They are also called Destinies or Parcæ.

**FATHERLAND (THE).** The name of the Germans for their



country. The English call their native country (England) Mother Country in relation to America and the Colonies.

**FAULT.** "At fault." Properly, not on the right track, as the allusion is to a dog who has missed the scent. Hence metaphorically it means puzzled or doubtful how to proceed. "In fault." To blame. Who is in fault, you or I? "To a fault." To excess. This is used in a complimentary sense. He is kind and generous to a fault; she loved him to a fault.

**FAVOUR.** This word is still used in its original sense of features or looks in such phrases as well-favoured or hard-favoured. "He favours his father." He takes after his father. Similar expression is "he is the spit of his father," the latter being more commonly used in England than the former. It can also be said that the father is the prototype of the son.

**FEAR.** This word which is now used to signify a sudden peril, danger, was originally used of the peril of travelling, coming as it does from the Anglo-Saxon *faran* meaning to go, travel.

**FEAST.** The American phrase "I am feasted of it" means I am so sick of it that I loathe it. It is probable that the word surfeit suggested this phrase, although it has been said that the word feast as used in that sense is a corruption of the Dutch word *ries* meaning nice, fastidious.

**FEATHER.** "Feathering one's cap." A mark of additional honour. There was a custom for anybody who slew an enemy to add a feather to the head-gear. "Feathering one's nest." Making provision for one's self while acting for somebody else. It takes its origin from the species of birds who line their nests with feathers to make themselves quite comfortable therein.

**FEBRUARY.** It comes from the Latin *februum* meaning a purgative. The name is applied to this month because the feast of Expiation (the feast of purification) was held on the 15th of this month.

**FECKLESS.** It is a common Scotch word and had not attained to literary distinction before Carlyle; and it is quite appropriate that it should have been first used by James I. (Scotchman) in his writing. Mr. Lloyd George has made it quite familiar now in his terms, "thriftless, shiftless, feckless." It means effectless, futile.

**FECUNDITY.** This word is allied to fetus, which means offspring.

**FED.** "I am fed up with it." This colloquial expression means I have had too much of it and it has ceased to please me. When a person bores another by talking at too great a length, the latter says that he is fed up with it. Girls are very fond of using this expression.

**FEDERATION TICKET.** It is a recent term. The Federation of Trade Unions issue this Ticket to its members as a passport. When they found they were not strong enough, the various Unions formed a federation; and paid a weekly contribution; and thus the members received a Federation Ticket.

**FEE.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *feoh* meaning cattle, and as it was the custom at one time to give cattle to lawyers, physicians and others in lieu of their fees, the word fee came to mean payment of money in due course.

**FEEBLE.** It comes from the Latin  *flere*, to weep, and the derivation of this word enables us to realise its full significance, namely, it is the feeble or the weak who weep.

**FEEL.** "Feeling Mondayish." Explained by illustration from the *Evening News* dated April 14th, 1914: "With many people getting back to work after a holiday is a painful process. Even the weekly break of Sunday throws some of us out of our working stride, as is proved by the existence of the expression 'feeling Mondayish.'"

**FEEZE, FAZE.** These slang terms signify "confuse" or "disconcert."

**FELICITATE, CONGRATULATE.** Felicitate is literally to pronounce one happy, and, therefore, it is personal. To congratulate is to wish happiness to others. Hence, strictly speaking, one felicitates himself and congratulates others, though the modern practice has reversed the proper usage of the words. Trench says "When I congratulate a person, I declare that I am sharer in his joy," but gratulation is a mere felicitation and does not in any way signify participation.

**FELLOW.** This word originally meant a companion of either sex, for instance, schoolfellow. We use this word as a term of contempt in the expression "a worthless fellow," also as a term of honour in the case of a "fellow" of a University, and also as a term of affection in the phrase "my dear fellow." Shakespeare uses this word in the sense of "companion," sharer or partaker.

**FELO DE SE.** These Latin words literally mean "a felon of himself," and therefore this expression can only be applied to the criminal, and not to the crime. Hence a man who commits suicide is a *felo de se*.

**FELON.** A wicked person. Both felon and fell, the latter meaning cruel, dire, come from the Latin *fello* or *felo*, a traitor.

**FEMALE.** This word is always an adjective when used to denote the sex, and in that sense should never be used as a noun. "I saw a man in company with a female" is, strictly speaking, bad grammar.

**FENCE, DEFENCE.** The former in reality is the latter without the prefix *de*.

**FEND, DEFEND.** Fend is a shortened form of defend, and from "fend" we derive the word "fender" (in front of the grate).

**FETCH.** It is used both as noun and as verb. As a noun, it means a stratagem.

**FETISH.** It is a Portuguese word meaning magic, hence a "fetish" is a charm or a talisman. It denotes a hobby or possession which the owner regards almost as his God.

**FEUDAL.** This word comes from the Low Latin *feudalis* meaning a vassal, and literally it means that which belongs to feuds or fiefs. It should be noted that "feuds" has nothing whatever to do with the other word feud which is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *fah* meaning hostile, and means quarrel or enmity, as for instance, "this is a long-standing family feud (quarrel)."

**FEZ.** A red Turkish cap without a brim. It is named after Fez in Morocco, where it was at first made.

**FIASCO.** This is an Italian word for bottle or flask. Whenever any flaw was discovered in the making of the beautiful old Venetian glass, the makers at once turned that delicate piece of work into a common flask, hence fiasco is used to denote an utter failure. Any theatrical performance which the audience do not approve of is termed "a fiasco."

**FIAT.** This Latin word means "let it be done," and it is an order or warrant from a superior to an inferior officer. "I give my fiat to that proposal" means I consent to it. This word fiat is used in the following form "the fiat has gone forth."

**FIB.** It is used both as noun and verb, as, "He is a great fib," "don't tell fibs." It is a mild term for a "lie," and most probably is a contracted form of "fable." Goldsmith uses this word in *She Sloops to Conquer* in the following sentence:—"Ask me no questions, and I will tell you no fibs," It is a very popular word in England.

**FIDDLE.** A violin. It is worthy of note that fiddle and violin both come from the same Latin word *vidula* or *vitula* meaning a viol. "Fiddle-faddle." Twaddle. Used both as noun and verb. "Fiddlestick." A fiddle-bow. Often used as an exclamation signifying nonsense. But in this sense it is always used in the plural. "Fiddle-de-dee." An exclamation of impatience signifying that what you say is fiddlesticks *i.e.* nonsense. Fiddle-de-dee is the sound of a fiddle-string vocalised which signifies nothing. "Scotch fiddle." The itch. As a fiddler scratches the strings of his instrument with a bow, so persons subject to skin-irritation keep scratching the part which irritates. "To play first or second fiddle." To take the chief or a subordinate part in anything. "He is first fiddle" means he is the chief man.

**FIDDLER.** "Drunk as a fiddler." Dead drunk. The allusion is to the fiddlers who used to drink to their hearts' content at wakes and fairs formerly until they could hardly keep their legs. "Fiddler's News." News that comes very late, literally, the stale news carried about by wandering fiddlers. "Have you heard that Lord Minto is dead?" "O! that's fiddler's news!"

**FIDGET.** It is a diminutive form of fidge meaning to be continually moving up and down.

**FIEND.** It is an Anglo-Saxon word which literally means enemy. The fiend of hell meaning the enemy of hell is called the devil, being opposed to God.

**FIG.** "I don't care a fig." This term is uttered either in contempt or indifference meaning that I don't care at all. It has nothing to do with the fruit "fig," but it comes from "fico" meaning a snap of the finger.

**FIGARO.** A type of cunning, dexterity and intrigue. In the play entitled *Le Barbier de Séville*, Figaro represents the character of a barber, and in the play entitled *Mariage de Figaro*, he represents the character of a valet, and in both these characters he outwits others by his cunning, dexterity and intrigue.

**FILIBUSTER.** "This word, the significance of which is a pirate, has a curious origin. It is derived from the Spanish word *filibote*; but the Spanish word itself is a corruption of the English word flyboat."—*Professor Max Muller*.

**FIMBLE-FAMBLE.** A lame excuse.

**FINANCE, FINANCES.** Finance is the system or science of monetary business; finances refers to concrete money-matters, and is generally applied to the Government Revenue.

**FINANCIAL, PECUNIARY, MONETARY.** Financial is applied to the Government Revenue or any public funds, while pecuniary and monetary refer to transactions between individuals.

**FIND, FIND OUT.** You may find a thing by chance, but you have got to exert yourself to find out (discover) a thing. Thus, to find a man means merely to come across him by chance, whereas to find out a man is to discover what sort of man he is and to detect faults in him.

**FINE.** Note how this word is used in two contradictory senses. We say "a fine needle" meaning slender and small, and we also describe a tall, athletic-looking man "a fine man." Originally "fine" meant "highly finished" and its subsequent use for signifying delicate and slender qualities can be easily imagined, for anything that is highly finished is both slender and delicate.

**FINGER.** It comes from fang which means that with which anything is seized.

**FINICAL.** It is a coined word, extended from fine.

**FIRE-EATER.** In old Cant it signifies a person who does a great amount of work in a short time; but in modern English it stands for "bully," who is always ready to fight.

**FIRST, FIRSTLY.** Although firstly is used by such writers as De Quincey, Dickens and others, the more common form nowadays is "first" because it is in itself an adverbial form. "First-chop." All through the United States of America this phrase is used in the sense of first-rate, the word *chop* being Chinese for quality. "First footing." Peculiarly Scotch custom. It is applied to the first person who enters a house after the beginning of the New Year. He must not come empty handed and must be dark-haired. "First-rate." An adjective, not an adverb. "He is a first-rate swimmer" is correct, but "he swims first-rate" is wrong.

**FISH (AT CARDS).** The counters used at cards instead of cash are called "fish," in which sense the word comes from the old word *fisc* meaning a treasury or heap of money. From the same root we have the word fiscal. "All is fish that comes to his net." He turns everything to some use no matter by what means. "I have other fish to fry." I have other business to attend to. "Neither fish nor fowl." Difficult to classify. "Neither fish, flesh, nor good herring." Difficult to classify. This phrase has been used by Tom Brown and Dryden. "The best fish swim near the bottom." Anything which is really valuable and, therefore, worth obtaining, cannot be obtained without trouble.

**FISHY.** Suspicious. A "fishy customer" is one who is cunning in his dealings and raises suspicion.

**FITS.** "To give one 'fits." To give one the blues. (Which see.) Similar expressions are "to give one the socks," "to give one the hump" (see "hump").

**FIVER.** Five pound note.

**FIZ.** Champagne, from its fizzing. "Fizzing" means first class, first rate, the reference being to the effervescence of champagne. Anything first-rate is "fizzer." In theatrical parlance, a first-rate part is called a "fizzer" or a "regular fizzer," the allusion being to the part being full of effervescence and life.

**FIZZLE.** The old English word "fizzle" means a flash, and anything which expires in a flash is said to fizzle. Hence, figuratively, it has come to mean a ridiculous failure. At American Colleges the term "fizzle" signifies a blundering recitation, and "to fizzle" is to recite badly. American Colleges also use the word "flunk" for an utter failure. It should be noted, however, that "to flunk" is to fail utterly, whereas "to fizzle" is to stumble through a thing at last i.e. to get through a thing somehow at last.

**FLABBERGAST (TO).** To astound. It is derived from the old English *gast* meaning to frighten, and *fleb* meaning to scare. It is much more forcible than astound, astonish, or confound. It is a colloquial word, though often used by London newspapers. In such phrases as "he was completely flabbergasted," "you flabbergast me."

**FLAG.** It is a weakened form of *flack* meaning to flap or to flutter in the wind. It was the custom to exhibit flags on the roofs of theatres by way of advertising the current performances. A flag of this description is to be seen on the roof of the Empire music hall at Shepherd's Bush, London.

**FLAGRANT.** It properly means burning, coming as it does from the Latin *flamma*, a flame, and hence glaring, as a fault.

**FLAME.** "She is my latest flame." This expression is peculiar to London in the sense of "she is my latest fancy."

**FLANNEL.** This word is allied to wool.

**FLAPDOODLE.** Slang for idle talk which is marked by the airs of superior knowledge on the part of the talker. A similar term is "twaddle" which is more common than the other.

**FLAPPER.** A girl under seventeen with her hair down is so called. A very popular term in England, and is quite recent.

**FLASH.** This is a word with various meanings (a) vulgar language, such as slang, Cant, in which sense the word was first used by Hitchin who wrote a Dictionary of "Flash Words" in 1718; (b) a person in showy, but tasteless dress; (c) spurious or counterfeit, as a flash banknote; (d) fast, roguish, as applied to persons. "A flash girl" is a showy street woman, and "a flash man" is a thief, a rogue. But in America a person, showing up well with no ostensible means of support is called flash; and (e) in Australia this term is used in the sense of conceited, or swaggering; and a batsman who starts hitting right and left the moment he goes in to bat they also call "flash."

**FLAT.** A soft person is so called, as opposed to a sharp person, sometimes varied to "flatty." An equivalent is "flat-fish," fish, signifying man, as in many other phrases such as "a queer fish," "a loose-fish." As adjective it means downright, plain, direct, straightforward, and in these senses it is derived from the Dutch *platt* meaning plain. "Flat-head." In America a green-horn is so called.

**FLATTEN.** "To flatten out." To get the better of; in argument or fight as "I flattened him out." "Flattened out" means beaten; ruined.

**FLATTER.** Flattery and the wagging of a dog's tail are closely associated with each other, and in nearly all the

Northern Languages the same word conveys both the meanings.

**FLAUNT.** Flaunt is combined out of fly, flout, and vaunt.

**FLEA.** "Flea in the ear." When a person leaves off his conversation with an irritating remark which cannot be refuted, his opponent is said to be dismissed with a flea in the ear.

**FLEE.** This is an Anglo-Saxon word which comes from the Sanskrit root *plu* meaning to fly or to jump. The Icelandic word *flo*, the German word *floh*, and the Dutch word *vlo*, all come from the same root. Leaping and jumping are the characteristic features of this little insect which we call "flea."

**FLIER.** "She is a bit of a flier" means she is a flirt.

**FLOOR.** Whenever this word is used, it retains one central sense, viz., of striking down. "I floored that paper" which means I answered every question in it, and "I floored that problem" which means I mastered it thoroughly, literally convey the idea of striking down the thing which is mastered, just as a prize-fighter floors or strikes down his opponent. "Floorer" in its pugilistic sense is a knock-down blow, and at schools a question or a paper too hard to be mastered is called a "floorer." Here too, the original sense of striking down is retained, as is done in the phrase, "He floored me in the argument" i.e. he put me to silence by completely beating me in the argument. When a picture is hung low at an exhibition, it is said to be "floored" in contradiction to "skyed" (which see). A picture is "floored," because it is not considered as deserving a high place on the wall, and is therefore beaten down low. "To have the floor" means to have the right of addressing a meeting before any other speaker rises to speak. "To take the floor" means to rise to address a public meeting. He then took the floor and delivered an eloquent speech.

**FLOTSAM AND JETSAM.** (Nautical.) Flotsam is such a portion of the wreck of the ship and the cargo as continues floating on the surface of the water. Jetsam means goods thrown into the sea while the ship is in danger with a view to lighten it. Beggars and tramps are also spoken of as the flotsam and jetsam of life. In the following sentence this expression is used in the sense of what is left undone:—"We are immersed in the work of disposing of the flotsam and jetsam of the Parliamentary Programme.—*London Opinion*, 1913.

**FLUFF.** "Fluff it." This term implies "take it away, I don't want it." Compare "lump it" (which see).

**FLUKE.** Originally a billiard term, signifying an accidental winning hazard. Now its application is extended to cricket, tennis and other games in the sense of a result not played for i.e. a stroke of luck. As verb it means to effect by accident,

and from "fluke" we have the adjective "fluky" e.g. a fluky stroke.

**FLURRY.** Hurry. Swift uses flurry in the sense of a gust of wind. This word is formed from flaw and hurry.

**FLUSH.** Like "flash" this word takes various meanings, (a) with plenty of money, as opposed to "hard up." Shakespeare uses it in this sense, (b) abounding in anything, as, flush of his notions i.e. prodigal of ideas or "she is in the flush of youth," (c) intoxicated, that is, full to the brim. In this sense "flushed" is oftener used than "flush," (d) to whip.

**FLY, FLEE.** The former means to float in air, and the latter means to escape. It should be noted that "flee" is not allied to "fly," though from an early date it has been confused with it. "Fly" is slangily used as adjective in the sense of wide-awake, knowing, artful. "On the fly." Out for a lark. A similar expression is "on the spree" (which see). "To be in a flying-mess" (soldiers). To be hungry and to have nothing to eat. "Fly in the amber." Amber sometimes contains a fly which detracts from its value. Hence it means a flaw in pleasure which would be otherwise perfect.

**FOAM.** This word is allied to spume.

**FODDER.** It means food for cattle, and is allied to food.

**FOLK.** People, in familiar language. Although this word is originally plural, English language is so little used to a plural without s, that folks may also be considered the best orthography. Greenough and Kittredge in their book *Words and their Ways in English Speech* use the term folk-etymology in the sense of popular etymology, and say it is "an adaptation of German *volks-etymologie*."

**FOLLOW.** "To follow up." It has two significations (a) to pursue closely as "to follow up a trail" (b) to do something subsequently to reinforce what is already done. He took his B.A. degree and he followed it up by taking his M.A. degree.

**FOND.** From fond we have the verb to fondle.

**FOOL.** In the Bible this word is used almost in the sense of wicked, where it says "fools make a mock of sin." But in the sense in which we use it now it is thoroughly compatible with the meaning implied by its derivation, because it comes from the Latin *folles*, a wind-bag, the plural of which is *folles*, puffed out cheeks. A fool or a buffoon invariably indulges in facial grimaces by puffing out his cheeks. "Fool's Paradise." Explained by illustration:—When a lover is satisfied with the enjoyments of the moment and does not realise the delusive character of the object of his enjoyment, he is said to be living in a fool's paradise. "Foolscap Paper." It is only a corruption of the Italian *foglio capo* which means a chief or full-sized sheet of paper.



**FORCE.** Both "force" and "fort" come from a Latin word meaning strength.

**FOREIGN, ALIEN.** Foreign is derived from the Latin *foris*, out of doors and signified not belonging to the family. Emerson says "there is no foreign language; it is the traveller only that is foreign." Foreigner literally means a traveller from abroad. Alien comes from *alius* meaning another's and it is a technical term for foreigners who may be residents or subjects as distinguished from natural born subjects.

**FORENSIC.** Belonging to law-courts. It is coined from the Latin *forens-is* meaning belonging to the forum, market place (see forum).

**FORESTALL.** It literally means "to waylay a dealer and buy his goods before he can place them on the stall in the market."

**FORGERY.** It comes from the old French *forjuror* and *forjur* meaning falsehood in a Court of Justice. The person who swore to the truth of a legal deed was called a *forjur*, and from that we stepped into the modern evil sense of the word forger, which shows that the word must have degenerated.

**FORLORN HOPE (A).** This phrase is an adaptation of the Dutch *verloren hoop* meaning lost band, and a forlorn hope is a body of soldiers who undertake a service which involves more than usual danger or peril.

**FORM.** It is originally a racing term, in such phrases as "in form" or "out of form," in which phrases form means fitness for a contest. A horse is said to be "in form" when he is at his best, and "out of form" when he is not as good as usual. The expressions "good form" and "bad form" refer to good manners, breeding, principles, taste, &c., and the opposite. Shakespeare in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* says:—"Can no way change you to a milder form," here "form" means manner of behaviour. We daily use the expressions "in form" or "out of form" for a cricketer or tennis-player, unaware of the fact that originally they are racing terms.

**FORWARDS, FORWARD.** The former is used in contrast to any other direction, as "if you move at all, you can only move forwards." The latter is used where no contrast is implied, as in the common phrase "to bring a matter forward."

**FOUND.** It properly means to lay the foundation of, and from "found" we have the word "foundation."

**FOURTH (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY).** The water-closets, the W.C., from there really being No. 4 at Trinity College, Cambridge. This term is now the only one in use at the Cambridge University, where no one uses the common

expression "W.C." "The Fourth Estate." Press. The three recognised estates of the Realm are, Lords, Clergy and Commons. Since Edmund Burke said in 1780 in the Commons that there was a more powerful estate than any of these in the "Reporters' Gallery," the press came to be known as the Fourth Estate.

**FOX.** As verb it means (a) to drink, hence "foxed," drunk. (b) in theatrical parlance, to criticise a fellow-actor's performance, (c) (printers) to stain, discolour with damp, said of books and engravings. Printers use the term "foxed" for a stained or spotted book, caused by dampness mostly, (d) (Fencing). To sham, to pretend. The term "foxing" as used in fencing, signifies a sham carelessness, intended to induce the adversary to "come out" less cautiously. "Fox's sleep" designates a state of feigned yet vigilant indifference to what is going on. Foxes were supposed to sleep with one eye open. "Foxy." A red-haired person is so called. In common parlance, a crafty person in character and look is called "foxy."

**FRANK, CANDID.** Frank originally meant free, and it was the name of a powerful German tribe. A Franklin was "a freeman sitting on his own land." Candid comes from the Latin *candidus* meaning bright or shining (see candidate).

**FRANKENSTEIN.** One who is hoist with his own petard or the victim of one's own invention. This expression is taken from Mrs. Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, in which Frankenstein, a young German physiologist manufactures a living creature, who finally causes his death.

**FREE.** This comes from an Anglo-Saxon root meaning "dear," and hence "free" originally meant those who were "dear" to the lord of the house, or in other words those who were his kinsmen and not slaves. Free-and-easy. A social gathering or a smoking party of any kind, generally held at a public house, the members of which drink, smoke, and sing, and sometimes "talk politics." The name signifies the character of the proceedings. Free-fight. A general melley. Free-lance. It has two meanings (a) a woman who does not run straight, an habitual adulteress, and (b) a journalist who is attached to no particular paper. Free lances were those who carried on irregular warfare.

**FREIGHT.** This is the price paid for carrying goods by sea.

**FRESH.** (Common) A person slightly intoxicated. (University.) A University man during his first year. Sometimes varied to "freshman" or "fresher." (American) Forward, impudent. I have often heard the expression "don't be fresh" used by actors on the stage in the sense of "don't be rude." It properly means inexperienced, but conceited, and hence impudent. "Fresh as paint" means full of health and strength. Similar expressions are "fresh as a daisy," "fresh

as a rose." The expression "fresh on the graft" means new to the work. (See graft.)

**FRET.** It properly means to eat away, from "for" and "cat."

**FRIDAY.** (Anglo Saxon *Frigeðæg*), day of Freya, Goddess of Marriage. Friday-face. "It is a term still occasionally applied to a sour-visaged person: it was formerly in very common use. In the old comedy of *Wily Beguiled*, 1606, we find, 'what a friday-faced slave it is! I think in my conscience his face never keeps holiday.' The phrase is doubtless derived from Friday being, ecclesiastically, the banyan day of the week."—*Gentlemen's Magazine*. Friday's feast (a). Catholics never eat anything but fish on Fridays, and hence the expression means a fast. "Man Friday." Those who have read *Robinson Crusoe* must be quite familiar with the character Friday who was such a useful and faithful servant to Robinson Crusoe. Hence it is applied to a useful and faithful servant.

**FRIGHT, TERROR, FEAR.** Fright is sudden fear; terror is habitual fear; fear is an uneasy state of mind brought about by the thought of future evil.

**FRUMP.** A slatternly woman, a fogey. As verb it means to mock, insult.

**FUDGE.** To make up or invent (a false story). The story runs that there was one Captain Fudge in command of a merchantman, who lived in 1700, and who always brought home his owner "a good cargo of lies" from his various voyages. He carried this habit so far that even now the sailors on hearing a great lie shout out "You fudge it."

**FULL.** "In full blast." In the height of success. Anything is said to be in full blast when at its highest point. "Full of guts." Said of a picture, a novel, etc., especially inspired and done. Guts means spirit, energy, or fire. The term "full of guts" is also applied to an actor. "In full fig." In this phrase "fig" is evidently the contraction of "figure" in books of fashion, and hence full figure means the height of fashion. "In full cry." In hot pursuit. The allusion is to a pack of hounds raising a simultaneous cry, when they have caught the scent. "In full swing." Very busy. When business is in full swing, the Manager goes about with a bright smile on his face. "Full dress." The dress worn on occasions of ceremony. For men a black suit, open vest, and a white neck tie constitute full dress. Ladies' full dress leaves the shoulders bare.

**FUNERAL.** "It is not my funeral." It is not my business, it does not concern me. Also used affirmatively. Sometimes instead of using the most common expression "mind your own business" I have heard Englishmen say "It is not your funeral." But in my opinion it is better to avoid the use of this expression.

**FUNK.** De Quincey is of opinion that this term originated among the Eton men. The English word "funk" means to smoke out, and it is probable that the sense of trepidation, nervousness, cowardice implied by the slang "funk" may have arisen from the original signification which conveys the idea of emitting an offensive smell such as that emitted by certain animals when pursued. It is used both as noun and verb, and a "funker" is a coward. It is employed in such phrases as "he is an awful funk," "he funk'd in the examination-hall." In America the word is used in the sense of "humbug." Although it has become more or less a recognised word, it is still used in its slangy sense.

**FURLOUGH.** By dropping "f" which has really no business to be there, we get the word "urlough" which comes from the German *urlaub* meaning permission, and the English military equivalent is "on leave." In German the preposition *auf* is equivalent to the English "on" and the expression *auf urlaub* became in English by hasty utterance on furlough.

**FUSTIAN.** Stuff, bombast or pretentious words. This word is derived from Fustat in Egypt, where this cloth Fustian (a sort of cotton-velvet) was first made. "Fustian words." Bombastic words, and in this sense it comes from the same Fustat in Egypt where the stuff was first made. But Isaac Taylor derives it from *fuste*, old French for a cask and is of opinion that fustian words mean toper's words. The first derivation is the one generally accepted.

## G.

**GAB.** Talk, prattle, twaddle. "Gift of the gab." It means talent for speaking, as, to a counsel the gift of the gab is a great asset. "Stop your gab." Hold your tongue.

**GABBLE.** Idle chatter. Two girls usually have a nice gabble together.

**GAFFER.** This word is said to be a contraction of grandfather and was a term of respect, as it was used for a master or employer. But it has degenerated now and is used as a term of contempt, when applied to an old labourer.

**GAG.** In theatrical parlance, language introduced by an actor into his part is called "gag," and in certain pieces this was allowed by custom. This interpolation on the part of actors has often been the means of saving many a play from utter ruin, especially when such interpolation took the form of bright lines or clever repartee. Actors were formerly termed "gaggers" but nowadays they are raised to the dignity of "artists."

**GALAXY.** It comes from the Greek *Galaxias*—*gala*, *galaktos*, akin to the Latin *lac*, *lactis* meaning milk, and the congregation of stars known as the milky way is called the Galaxy. Hence this term is applied to an assemblage of great celebrities.

**GALLERY.** A "gallery-stroke" in cricket is a very high hit up into the air, also known as "a regular skyer." "The Gallery Gods" are the people in the upper gallery of a theatre.

**GALLEY.** "Galley-slaves." Formerly the condemned criminals were punished by being employed as rowers on large-sized vessels called galleys. Although these criminals still retain that name, this present compulsory work consists in labouring in the docks and military harbours of France, Spain and Italy, and they have almost become notorious for their miserable, vicious and degraded life.

**GALLOW.** As verb it means to terrify, and in *King Lear* Shakespeare so uses it.

**GAMBLER.** This word has entirely changed its meaning. Johnson calls it a "cant" word and thinks it is a substitute for "game" or "gamester."

**GAMMON.** In the sense of joking, nonsense, &c. it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *gamen* meaning a game or a sport, and this original sense is retained in the game called "backgammon." It is not in any way connected with a "gammon" of bacon.

**GANGER.** This is formed from the verb to "gang" which comes from the Anglo-Saxon, *gangan*, to go or to travel together, and hence persons going together for some purpose or other are called a "gang." The word "gang" was extended into "ganger" literally meaning a leader and is used in the same sense in which "gaffer" was originally used.

**GARB.** "Garb" and "gear" which mean dress are connected with each other.

**GARBLE.** Originally to garble means to sift out, or sort, or select for a purpose, hence, to corrupt an account. To garble a statement is literally to select it for one's purpose, and hence, to pervert it.

**GARMENT.** It comes from the French *garnir* meaning to garnish or decorate. At one time it was written "garnement."

**GAS.** It is probable that the inventor Van Helmont, a physician of Brussels, (1577-1644) was influenced by the Greek word *chaos*. It is equally probable that this word was suggested by the German *geist* meaning a ghost or spirit. He also invented the term *blas* which, unlike "gas," did not come into use.

**GAS.** As noun it means empty or boastful talk, as "it is all gas." As verb it means to talk idly or to brag, and it conveys the idea of talking for mere talking's sake. "To give

gas" is to scold or give a beating. "None of your old gas" is equivalent to "none of your bragging, none of your nonsense." "To take the gas out of one" is to take the conceit out of one. "Gas bag" is a chatter-box (which see), "a Gaseonader" (which see). "Gassy" is said of a person who flares up, or takes umbrage at any offence.

**GATE.** It has two meanings, (a) a door and (b) a street, path, way. In its secondary sense, it means more a way than a street or path, and it is from its signifying "a way" that we get the word "gait," meaning manner of walking. "Gait" is only a particular use of "gate," a way.

**GAUDY.** At the Inns of Court and at the Oxford University this term signifies "grand feast," or grand night dinner, as they call it at the Inns of Court. The annual dinner of the Fellows of a College in memory of its founders is also so called. The word comes from the Latin *gaudium*, gladness, joy. The very derivation of the word conveys the idea of rejoicing, and this sense is retained in the use of the word at the Inns and at Oxford University, because at a feast there is always rejoicing. It is a pity that it is very seldom used in its original sense and that the word has now mostly confined itself to its secondary meaning of showy, ornamental, which does in a way convey the idea of rejoicing, but certainly not so much as a feast or festival does. In its later sense of showiness the word "gaud" is akin to joy, jewel (which see).

**GAUGE.** It is also spelt "gage" to which spelling Shakespeare was partial. It means to measure the content of a vessel, hence, figuratively to probe, as "to gauge one's heart."

**GAUNTLET.** "To run the gauntlet." When an author or a politician or any individual becomes the object of general criticism, he is said to run the gauntlet. "To take up the gauntlet." To meet a challenge. "To throw down the gauntlet." To give a challenge.

**GAWKY.** It means clumsy. It is derived from "awk," the left hand, awkward with a prefix "g."

**GAY.** It means dissipated, loose, as "a gay woman." In slang language, "a fast woman" is sometimes spoken of as "a gay woman" which is absolutely wrong, though it is perfectly right to speak of "a gay woman" as "a forward hussy," "hussy" being a corruption of the word "housewife," and invariably used in a bad sense. "Gay house" is a brothel. "To be gay" means to be drunk. "All gay" means all right, all serene (which see).

**GAZETTE.** Some authorities think that this word was so named from the *gazatta*, the small coin of Venice, but Edgewood thinks this to be an error. It seems quite feasible that the word is derived from the *gazza* a magpie, and hence the

word means all sorts of idle gossip just as a magpie indulges in different sorts of chattering tunes.

**GEE** (or **GEE-GEE**). A childish equivalent for horse. Similar expression is "prad." As verb, it means (a) to go, or turn to the off-side, used as a direction to horses; and (b) to move faster, as a teamster to his horses, the more familiar expression being "gee up!" "To gee with" means to agree with, to go on all fours with (which see). "Gee whiz." A slaying exclamation of astonishment.

**GEEZER**. Old persons especially women are called geezers in derision. Formerly it meant a mummer.

**GENERAL**. It literally means relating to a "genus," and hence, common, applied both to persons and things.

**GENERAL, UNIVERSAL**. A general rule holds good in most cases. Universal refers to all without any exception. General admits of comparison, universal does not.

**GENERIC**. Literally pertaining to a genus, and hence, common, applied to things only.

**GENIAL**. It means pleasant, and according to Skcat, it is an adjective from "genius."

**GENT**. This is a contraction of "gentleman." Though commonly used, Thackeray completely dropped this word out of use. It is curious to note that Spenser uses this word in two cases in reference to a lady in his "Faerie Queene." It is generally applied to a dressy fellow.

**GENTEEL**. When applied to persons, this word refers to some particular characteristic. "A person of genteel speech" means a person of polite speech as that of a well-bred person. "A genteel fortune" means a fortune that suits the condition of a well-bred person.

**GENUS**. To the students of English literature it would be interesting to note that a number of words beginning with "gen" such as genius, genteel, generous, genesis, &c., are derived from the Latin *genus* meaning birth, descent, origin. The word "genus" is cognate with "kin," "kith" and "kindred" and with the Sanskrit *jan*, to beget.

**GERRYMANDER**. It is an established political term in the United States and Canada for the "redistributing" of a State in such a manner as to unfairly secure disproportionate influence at election for some party or class. This trick was resorted to by Elbridge Gerry in Massachusetts in 1812, when he was Governor of the Commonwealth. A map of the redistribution was published which some clever person said should be called a gerrymander, as it nearly resembled a Salamander. Hence the meaning of the expression is "to manipulate figures."

**GET**. "Getting a half-blue." This term is used for men chosen to represent their Universities at minor sports.

"Getting one's blue" (Oxford and Cambridge). A man is said "to get his blue" when he represents his University against the rival University in the annual boat-race, cricket match or football matches. The term "true blue" means consistent to one's party. Scotch covenanters wore home-made blue cloth as opposed to the scarlet badge of Charles the First. In political warfare blue is the colour adopted by the Liberal party. "To get a gate." A slang phrase for hastening one's steps or moving on. "To get a hat" (Cricket). It is the same as "to make a hat-trick" *i.e.* to take three wickets in succession. The allusion is to the presenting of a cocked hat to the bowler who achieved this feat. Similarly "bat-trick" which means hitting three successive fours, and, hence, the batsman's feat. "Getting into a hole." It means getting one's self into a scrape or some sort of difficulty. This expression owes its origin to an accident which often occurs in golf-playing, where if a ball "gets into a hole," the player of that ball is most likely to lose the game. "Getting into a scrape." The deer are addicted, at certain seasons, to dig up the land with their fore feet, in holes, to the depth of a foot, or even of half a yard. These are called "scrapes." To tumble into one of these is sometimes done at the cost of a broken leg; hence a man who finds himself in an unpleasant position, from which extraction is difficult, is said to have "got into a scrape."—Newspaper Paragraph.

**GHASTLY.** Some believe that this word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *gaestlic* meaning terrible, while others are of opinion that we get it from the Anglo-Saxon *gast* meaning a ghost or a spirit.

**GHETTO.** The Ghetto was a place in an Italian town where the Jews lived apart from others during the period of their persecution. It now means any locality inhabited by Jews.

**GHOST.** "The ghost of a chance." It means not the shadow of a probability. For instance "he has not the ghost of a chance of passing in his examination." "Then the ghost won't walk to-night." Many years ago a theatrical manager of the unreliable order had in his company an actor whose strong part was the ghost in *Hamlet*. If his salary was not forthcoming in time, he was wont to exclaim: "Then the ghost won't walk to-night!"—a phrase which still may be heard in some theatres on pay-day.—*Answers*, May 9th, 1914.

**GIANT.** "The giant of Literature." Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1783) is so styled. He was also called the "Great Moralist."

**GIBBERISH.** It is said that this word owes its origin to the Arabian alchemist Geber, who in order to avoid capital punishment in case of his giving out his opinions openly clothed them in a mystical jargon. But it is more likely that



it is formed from the word "gibber" which is another form of "jabber" meaning to chatter idly.

**GIG.** "Gig-lamps." This is slang for spectacles, as gig-lamps are the spectacles of a gig.

**GILT.** "Gilt-edged lie." A lie which, if not examined too closely, may be accepted with reserve as solid truth. "Gilt-edged securities." Such investments as trustees prefer or are restricted to. In the latter part of the nineteenth century many public companies failed, and this phrase came into use to signify investments which were thoroughly sound and which guaranteed safety. The certificates of investments were gilt-edged (just as some books are) to give an idea of superiority, and hence the expression.

**GIPOY.** This is a corruption of the Middle English "Giptian" which is a contraction of "Egyptians." This was applied to the gipsies as they were supposed to have come from Egypt. They have been called by different names, but by themselves they are called *Rom* meaning a man and hence we have "Romani" by which they are often called.

**GIRL.** The etymology of this word is open to question and the authorities are so conflicting and contradicting that it is well-nigh impossible to come to any definite conclusion. Skinner derives it from the Anglo-Saxon *ceorl* which meant a man, so *ceorla* for a woman. Halliwell thinks that we get it from the Anglo-Saxon *gerl* meaning a young person of either sex. Minshew gives the Italian *girella* meaning a weather-cock. Bailey derives it from *garrula*, "because they are addicted to talkativeness." This last derivation seems the most feasible one, though Webster says "it is most probably from the Low Latin *gerula*, she who carries, applied to a young woman, employed to tend children."

**GIST.** Some think that this word is derived from the old French *giste*, meaning a lodging place and hence the gist of anything is its essence or pith. It might have come from the German *geist*, a spirit.

**GIVE.** "To give the cold shoulder." This expression means to show by manner and action that either a thing or a person is not welcome. In earlier times an unwelcome guest was given the humble cold shoulder of mutton instead of the dainties given to a welcome guest, and hence the expression. "To give quarter." To spare the life of a vanquished enemy. It refers to the custom of accepting a quarter of a captive's pay as ransom. "To give one's self away" (colloquial). To betray one's self by an unconscious slip of the tongue. He said what he did not want to say, and thus gave himself away. "To give one's self up." To devote one's self to. The hermit gave himself up to meditation. "To give the sack" (popular). To dismiss *e.g.* the master gave his servant the sack. For the origin of this phrase I quote the following

from *American Notes and Queries* :—"Two noblemen in the reign of Maximilian II. (1564-1576), one a German, the other a Spaniard, who had each rendered a great service to the emperor, asked the hand of his daughter, Helena, in marriage. Maximilian said that as he esteemed them both alike it was impossible to choose between them, and therefore their own prowess must decide it, but being unwilling to risk the loss of either by engaging them in deadly combat he ordered a large sack to be brought, and declared that he who should put his rival into it should have his fair Helena. And this whimsical combat was actually performed in the presence of the imperial court, and lasted an hour. The unhappy Spanish nobleman was first overcome, and the German succeeded in enveloping him in the sack, took him upon his back, and laid him at the emperor's feet! This comical combat is said to be the origin of the phrase, "give him the sack," so common in the literature, of courting."

**GLAD.** The German equivalent *glatt* has retained the original meaning of "glad" which was "smooth." The old English word *glade* had already ceased to mean "smooth" and was used to signify bright or shining, as applied to gold, silver and light. It may be observed that this sense was developed from the original meaning of the word, for things look bright and shining after being rubbed "smooth." From this sprang the sense of "cheerful" or joyous in old English. In modern English the word has lost its sense of bright and shining, and "glad" is now used only in connection with pleasure felt for some specified cause. "Glad eye." A smiling glance which denotes a desire for acquaintance. It is a natural impulse indulged in by either sex to draw or attract the other. The phrase is quite recent, and enters into such phrases as "he gave her the glad eye," or "don't give her the glad eye."

**GLAMOUR.** This word is a doublet of *grammar* and was popularised by Sir Walter Scott who read it in old ballad literature. The word *grammar* in the Middle Ages was used in the sense of mysterious learning, and for the change of "r" to "l" there is nothing to be wondered at, as we have similar instances in the English language, notably the older word *frounce* which has now become *flounce*.

**GLASSES.** Figuratively used for "spectacles."

**GLOAMING.** This word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *glomung*, which is derived from *glom* meaning gloom, and it means the fall of the evening—the time of gloom. The idea of melancholy is conveyed in the derivation.

**GLOOM.** Milton uses this word in the sense of darkness, and it is possible that Shakespeare's "gloomy woods" suggested it. Scottish writers had used the word to denote "a scowl or frown."

**GLOSS.** This verb comes from the Greco-Latin *glossa*, meaning tongue, &c., and originally it means to explain or translate. But as some connected it with the other word "gloss" meaning superficial lustre, they attached to this the sense of "specious interpretation."

**GLOSSARY.** It comes from a Greek word meaning a tongue, a language. It means a sort of explanatory dictionary of obsolete terms and obscure or antiquated words. Books of old writers such as Chaucer, Spenser and others are often furnished with glossaries.

**GLUM.** Sulky, stern, as "he looks glum." "To glump" is to sulk. A "glumpish" person is one of a sulky temper. It is related to gloom.

**GO.** A drink, specially a quarter of gin. Formerly a go-down meant a drink. Commonly used in England for energy, spirit, vigour, impetus, vim &c. Although originally slang in this sense, it has now thoroughly established itself in the language, because as a word in itself it is very expressive and useful, as "he has plenty of go in him" or "there is no go in him." It is also synonymous with circumstance, occurrence, incident, *e.g.*, "a rum go" meaning a strange affair; "a great go," a remarkable or important affair; "a pretty go," a startling circumstance. It also means the fashion, the correct thing, generally in the phrase "all the go" *i.e.* much in vogue. The interjection "go it" is a term of encouragement, implying keep at it, keep it up. The partisans of one prize-fighter against another shout "Go it! go it!" when the latter shows signs of slackening. "To have a go at" to make an attempt at anything, as a shot at billiards, a man in a fight &c. "To go in for" is used both in good and bad sense. A student may go in for honours at his college and he may also go in for all sorts of vices. "Go to Bath and get your head shaved." It was the custom to send insane people to Bath to drink the mineral waters there, and it was also the custom to shave the head, when a person was insane. Hence the meaning of the proverbial saying is quite obvious. "To go off on the ear." (American.) To be suddenly irritated. A similar expression is "to fly off in a tantrum." "To go with the stream." To go with the times or to do what people around one do. "To give one the go-by." Not to acknowledge one. "Go it blind." (American.) To act without deliberating. It has its origin from the game of "Poker," where a player may "go it blind" by doubling the "ante" before he sees his cards and if the other players refuse to see his blind, he wins the ante. "Go to grass" (American). This is equivalent to the English exclamation "Be off" or "get out."

**GOAT AND COMPASSES.** This is a corruption of the

original phrase "God encompasseth" meaning God surrounds us everywhere. At one time innkeepers used to have a board bearing the words "God encompasseth," as a token of blessings to the visitors. Now one sees the corrupted phrase "Goat and compasses" printed on the walls of public houses in some country places.

**GOD.** In almost all languages the word is the same and the root of the word is "Gutha" meaning God and which has no connection with the word good. Some believe that the word "God" is connected with the Persian *Khoda*, meaning Lord, and with the Sanskrit *Gudah* meaning secret. Professor Max Muller is also of opinion that the word "God" is quite distinct from the word "good." "God save the mark." This expression is said to arise from an old Irish superstition. When a person tells a story of an injured person, by touching the corresponding part of his own body, he is supposed to avert a similar misfortune to himself by exclaiming "God save the mark."

**GOGGLE.** To roll the eyes, to stare, hence, goggle-eyed means squint-eyed. "Goggles" are a kind of coloured spectacles for protecting eyes from glare, dust, &c., most commonly worn by motorists.

**GOING.** "Going Snacks." It means going halves or dividing the spoil. Snacks was a man whose business was to look to the dead bodies of those who died from the plague in London and his work increased so much that he was compelled to call in the assistance of others, promising them half of his profits. Those who helped him were said to go with Snacks, and hence the expression. "Going the whole hog." Seeing a thing right through to the finish at all costs. It conveys different meaning to people of different places. In Ireland it means "spending a whole shilling," as "hog" is slangily used for shilling. In America it signifies holding democratic views to extremes. With Englishmen it means what the phrase really means, viz., to see a thing right through to the finish at any sacrifice.

**GOLD.** It is peculiar that in almost all the Aryan languages this word is very similar, for instance, the German *gold*, the Swedish and Danish *guld*, and the Dutch *gould*, and it is supposed to have been derived from the same root *ghar* meaning to be yellow. It is for that reason that "yellow boy" is slangily used for a sovereign.

**GOLDEN.** "The Golden Age." The great Elizabethan age which was remarkable for human progress in various channels, especially the progress of literature. "The Golden State." California.

**GOLDY.** A name given by Dr. Samuel Johnson to Oliver Goldsmith, an English poet and novelist. Horace Walpole gave him the name of "Inspired idiot."

**GONE.** In the sense of ruin, loss, this word is originally American, though commonly used in England, as in the expressions "gone up" and "gone down" which are synonymous, the former being American. The word "gone" enters into various phrases with the sense of hopelessness, as, "gone case" which is said of a person who shows marked and serious affection for a woman, and it is also applied to one in a hopeless condition; "a gone goose"; "a gone coon" is a person who is lost or ruined, or is in a 'terrible fix, coon is short for racoon, an American animal valued for its fur, and when a coon is hunted for its fur and it cannot escape its pursuers, it is a "gone coon"; "gone bird," or "it is all gone-day with him" *i.e.* his time is lost or over. "Gone for" is also originally American and is a theatrical term meaning criticised, run down. "Gone on" means "sweet on" or "mashed on" (which see). A "goner" is a person past recovery or done for in any way. A dying person is also called a "goner." "Goney" (American) means a stupid, foolish fellow. "Gone in" (Colonial). A person who has lost the savour of life at an early stage and becomes somewhat of a cynic is so called. "Clean gone." This expression which is now counted as dreadfully vulgar has been used by Shakespeare in the sense of "Out of Sight" or entirely away. "Gone to the devil." There used to be a tavern in Fleet Street near Temple Bar by the name of the "Devil and St. Dunstan," which was noted for its excellent wines and which was much frequented by lawyers. Whenever a lawyer went to dine there, he put a notice on his door, "Gone to the Devil." Some people who neglected their business also had this notice put up, and consequently this expression came to mean "came to ruin."

**GOOD.** This word is used in America as an adverb in such phrases as "he can't read good," "it does not shoot good." "Good Friday." It is probably a form of God's Friday, which refers to the day which commemorates the death of Jesus Christ, the God-man. "A good hater is a good lover and *vice versa*." It means that one capable of experiencing passion in one direction is capable in another. "He is as good as good bread." This simple and homely Spanish proverb has become "as good as gold" in English and Ulicia Ralph Burke in his *Sancho Panza's Proverbs* gives the following reason for this:—"In England we are more ambitious or more mercenary." "Good wine needs no bush." Formerly it was the custom to hang out at the doors of taverns a bush of ivy as a token of the good wine that could be had there. Hence figuratively it means a good article needs no advertisement.

**GOOD-BYE.** It is a contraction of "God-be-with-you."

**GOOD NIGHT.** The dovetail to a surprising piece of news.

Similar expressions are "go on"; "Well, I never did" (which see). But this is the most emphatic of all.

**GOOD THING (RACING).** A horse that is considered certain of winning a race is said to be a "good thing," though more often than not he turns out to be a "bad thing" for his supporter.

**GOODWILL.** Goodwill is the reputation attached to a business, and as such is valued over and above the capital and effects embarked in it.

**GOODY (ARCHAIC).** A term of civility applied to women in humble life.

**GOODY-GOOD (or GOODY-GOODY).** A person who is sentimentally virtuous; one who is excessively squeamish in morals.

**GOOGLY.** "B. J. T. Bosanquet of Middlesex, is generally credited with having discovered the googly by tossing a tennis ball about on a lawn; he found that it was possible to get an off-break on though bowling with a leg-break action. That is what is known as the googly—a ball which looks like a leg-break but which, owing to reverse spin being imparted to it, breaks in from the off after pitching. It is bowled by bringing the ball out of the hand "backwards"; that is to say, by turning the hand over and delivering the ball over the little finger.—*Pearson's Weekly* dated week ending May 16th, 1914.

**GOOSE.** As noun "a goose" is a tailor's pressing iron, from its handle being shaped like the neck of the bird (goose), and a simpleton, especially a woman, is also so called. As verb, in theatrical slang, it means to hiss a play, and "to get the goose" is to be hissed, while on the stage. Another equivalent expression is "to get the big bird" (which see). Sometimes this is varied to "to get the bird." In America "to goose" means "to mend boots by putting in or adding piece of leather" or in other words "to foot boots." "To goose a person" is very commonly used to signify "to fool a person" and this sense is taken from "making a goose of a person."

**GOOSEBERRY.** As noun, it means a fool as well as a marvellous tale. From the latter sense, we have the "gooseberry season," which is the dull time of journalism, when the appearance of vegetables, &c., affords the journals an opportunity of filling their columns with reports of these things in default of interesting current news. "The silly season" is originally a political phrase, signifying parliamentary recess. This is the time when nearly everybody who is anybody is out of town, and what with dearth of political and social news, newspapers fill up their columns with all sorts of political and social twaddle, and this being so, this is called their "silly season" i.e. the dead or off season of journalism.

Although "the silly season" is used in the same sense as "gooseberry season" in reference to journalism, it should be noted that the application of the former is in its secondary sense. "To play gooseberry" (which see under "Play") literally means to sit third in a hansom like a bone in the fish. Note the popular saying: "Two is company, three is none," or "two is company, three is a crowd."

**GORDIAN KNOT.** Difficult problem or task, the allusion is to Gordius tier of knot cut by Alexander the Great. A problem that defies solution and whoever solves it is said to have cut the Gordian knot.

**GORE.** As a verb meaning "to stab" has no affinity with the noun "gore" meaning blood. The verb comes from the Gallic *gaorr*, to pierce; whereas the noun comes from the Anglo-Indian *gor*, meaning clotted blood or mud.

**GORGEOUS.** It comes from the French *gorge*, throat, and originally meant proud, from the swelling of the throat in pride, and now, it is used in the sense of "showy, splendid." (See *Gorger*.)

**GORGER.** A well-dressed man *i.e.* a swell is so called, probably from the word "gorgeous." The term is also applied to the manager of a theatre.

**GORILLA.** In the fifth century B.C. Hanno, a Carthaginian navigator described the hairy savages he met as gorillas in his book of adventures. This was translated into many European languages with the result that naturalists became familiar with the word. In 1847 the name was applied to the giant ape.

**GOSPEL.** Gospel was anciently Godspel meaning good news. But it is more probable that Gospel is the Anglo-Saxon *God-spell* meaning a God-story or a narrative of God.

**GOSSIP.** It is a corruption of "God-sib." *Gesib* or *Sib* is the Anglo-Saxon word for kinsman and *sib* is still in use in Scotland and stands for a "cousin" or a near relation. Shakespeare uses it in its original sense of "Sponsor" in *Henry VIII*. It may be observed here that Dean Hoare inclines to the belief that this word has come to mean idle chattering from the practice of God-parents meeting together and having a chat.

**GOT.** "I have got you." (University.) "Now I understand you. A explains something to B which the latter does not quite grasp. A keeps on explaining when B all of a sudden says "Oh, I have got you." "Got the mitten" (American). When a lady discards a young man who has been paying her his addresses, he is said to have "got the mitten." The word "mitten" comes from the Latin *mittens* meaning to send. *Mittent* is now obsolete except in the compound word *intermittent*.

**GOWK.** It signifies a simpleton, or a stupid person. It is Scandinavian and the Icelandic *gaukr*, the Swedish *gok*, and the German *gauch*, all mean cuckoo, simpleton.

**GOWN.** A "gownsmán" is a student at Cambridge and Oxford Universities, the reference being to his always being in his gown, while he walks about in the streets, the breach of which observance subjects him to penalty. "Gown and town row" is a fight between University students and townsmen.

**GRAB.** It means to grasp to which word it is closely allied. In thieves' slang "to grab" means to arrest. "Grab-all" is an avaricious person. In England "grab" is colloquially used for a sudden grasp in the sense of an undue advantage. In the United States, "a grab" means a robbery. "Land-grabbers" is a phrase that is in popular use in Ireland and Scotland to designate the anti-rent masters who wish to grab (seize) the land that does not belong to them. The Dutch "grabbél" means a scramble, hence "to grab" literally can be said to mean "to scramble for," but with this difference that while "grabbing" always conveys the idea of seizing greedily or avariciously, "scrambling" is, as a rule, used in a good sense, as, "he is scrambling for a living" i.e. struggling his utmost for a living. "Grasping" is as uncomplimentary as "grabbing," and hence, a grasping person means an over-exacting, or greedy person. In "Lycidas" Milton uses the verb "to scramble" in reference to clergymen in a disparaging sense, and many a reader must be familiar with those immortal lines.

**GRACE.** "To say grace" is to ask the blessing of God before sitting down to a meal. "To get into a person's good graces." To gain a person's favour.

**GRACEFUL, ELEGANT.** Both are applicable to the motion of the body, but elegance is also applicable to language and to dress, as, an elegant style, an elegant gown. Graceful is that which is pleasing to the eye, and elegant is that which refers to qualities of refinement, taste or polish, and is of a higher nature. Anything elegant inspires admiration. Gracefulness can be acquired by the aid of art, whereas elegance bespeaks not only high birth and rank, but superior natural endowments. A graceful woman is a charming, well-accomplished, and well-mannered woman, whereas an elegant woman at once conveys to one's mind not only the idea of accomplishments and good manners, but also of superior birth and rank.

**GRACIOUS.** No less an extensive meaning is attached to the word "gracious" than that with which young ladies invest the word "nice." For instance, we have "a gracious sermon," "a gracious meeting," "a gracious child" and even "a gracious whipping."



**GRADE.** It is curious that this word first appeared in Todd's "Johnson" in 1818, and Todd then wrote that this word would hardly be adopted in the English language. But we know that Todd was rather too premature in his assertion, as this word is in common use in England.

**GRAFT.** It comes from the Latin *graphium*, a style to write with. According to the etymology "graff" is the proper spelling of the word, and "graft" is its later form, due to confusion with "grafted." Shakespeare has "graft" in *Richard III.* To graft is to insert a small shoot or scion of one tree into that of another and the shoot thus inserted becomes part of it, though it retains its native character. Hence, figuratively, to graft is to 'fix in or upon so as to produce an indissoluble union. In surgery "graft" means piece of transplanted living tissue. In England "graft" is slangily used for work, employment, for instance, "where are you grafting" or "what graft are you on." In the United States "graft" is colloquially used for illicit spoils in connection with politics, or municipal business, and also for practices for securing these spoils, and the word is in most common use there.

**GRAIN.** In America this word signifies a particle or a little. "I don't care a grain" means I don't care a bit. The expression "against the grain" means against one's inclination or bias; unpleasant. The illusion is to wood which cannot be easily planed the wrong way of the grain. In the phrase "this goes against the grain" it means "this goes against the moot point."

**GRAMERCY.** It is a corruption of the French *grand merci* meaning many thanks. It is an old-fashioned word.

**GRAMMAR.** The expressions "good grammar" and "bad grammar" may be approved of or condemned according to the definitions of the word grammar. If we define grammar as "speech or writing considered with regard to its correctness; propriety of linguistic usage," the phrases "good grammar" and "bad grammar" are perfectly correct. But if we define grammar as "the art of speaking and writing a language correctly," these phrases are absolutely wrong. It should, however, be noted that the definition of grammar as "the art of speaking and writing a language correctly" is not correct, as it applies only to a portion of this branch of study. And hence, those who object to the use of these phrases base their criticism on a misunderstanding. The word grammar, unlike the word orthography, which, as its etymology implies, is the art of writing correctly, does not carry with it the implication of correctness, and almost all the modern grammarians bear this out. In common use, the word grammar means "a treatise on some one well-defined form of speech as used in the present day."

And thus when we speak of English grammar "we mean an account of the language spoken and written throughout Great Britain by educated men, which language, however, is only one dialect of English speech, the East Midland." Masters of English language such as Dryden and Macaulay have used these expressions. Dryden says, "And I doubt the word 'they' is false grammar." Macaulay twice uses the expression "bad grammar." In his *History of England* (Vol. IV.) he says, "The letter may still be read, with all the original bad grammar and bad spelling." And in his *Frederick the Great*, while writing of him he says, "He had German enough to scold his servants, but his grammar and pronunciations are extremely bad."

**GRAMMATICAL ERROR.** This expression is preferred to "Violation of grammatical rules (or precision)."

**GRANDE PASSION.** It is the French for love.

**GRANDILOQUENT, GRANDIOSE.** The former means pompous in speech, from the Latin *grandi*, great, and *loqui*, to speak, and is the same as grandiloquacious. Grandiose is a French word and means imposing; aiming at or affecting grandeur. "With all our grandiose schemes of Social Reform, there is somewhere something hopelessly muddled and wrong."—*John Bull*, 1913.

**GRANGE.** It is derived from the Latin *granum* (granary) where the corn was stored. Now it is applied to premises of some importance or a house.

**GRANITE.** It comes from the Latin *granum* meaning a grain. It is so called because of grains of various minerals compacted together.

**GRANT, AFFORD.** To grant generally means to bestow a gift asked for or in answer to a request. To afford is simply to give, and also to be able to give, as in the phrase "He can afford to lose the stakes."

**GRASS.** "To go to grass," has two significations (a) to die, in coarse allusion to burial, and (b) to abscond, to disappear. It should not be confused with the interjectional expression "Go to grass" which is equivalent to "be off" or "be hanged." In this case, it is supposed to be a corruption of "go to grace," the word grace meaning quite the opposite to what it really does. "Grass-cloth." Cloth has been made from bamboo and grass-cloth is the name given by travellers to the coarse cloth made by savage races. "Grass-comber." A hay-maker. "Grass-widow." It is not a refined term. It is contemptuously applied to a woman who is abandoned by or separated from her husband. A "grass widower" is the husband from whom his wife is temporarily absent. "To let the grass grow under one's feet." It literally means to let the occasion slip by, that is, to be idle and lazy.

**GRATEFUL.** In ordinary language this word means sensible of benefits. But it also means exciting joy or pleasure; pleasing to the feelings. "The cool breeze is grateful to a fevered patient." Grateful should not be used for thankfulness, which only expresses itself in words. A man may thank you when you do him a favour, but he may prove ungrateful afterwards.

**GRATIS.** Both *gratis* and *grace* come from the same Latin root *gratia* which means grace or favour, and to give a thing gratis (free) is to give it as a matter of favour or grace.

**GRAVE.** In the sense of a place of burial, this word comes from the old verb "to grave" meaning to dig or to excavate. In the sense of sober or serious in look and manner, this word comes from the Latin *gravis*, grave.

**GRAY.** "The gray of the morning." "The dawn."

**GREASE.** "To grease the palm." To bribe. A similar expression is "to oil the palm."

**GREAT, LARGE.** Although these words, when applied to things, mean very much the same, they have a slight distinction. When a person says that he found a large table in his room, he simply states a fact; but when he says that he found a great table in his room, he conveys to others the idea of being surprised. "Great" in this sense has an element of emotion.

**GREAT, BIG.** Great, as applied to persons, refers, as a rule, to the mental capacity; and big, as a rule, to the physical capacity. Shakespeare was a great man, but not a big man. "Great cry and little wool." This expression is very common. It is said of a boaster who uses many words but says nothing of any importance. "A great gun." A noted personage. "To blow great guns" is to do great things by booming them. "Great pot" (racing). A prophet. "Great smoke." It stands for London which is noted for its smoking chimneys. It is a thieves' term.

**GRECIAN BAND (THE).** An elegant stoop of the backbone which ladies affected at one time.

**GREEK.** "Greek calends." It means "never" because the Greeks never reckoned by "Calends." A promise of payment on the Greek Calends is worthless because it is never meant to be fulfilled. "Greek gifts." This means gifts or presents particularly sent to injure the receiver. The Greeks sent the Trojans the wooden horse as an offering to the gods, but this was found to contain armed men who were thus treacherously introduced into the enemy's camp. "When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war." This is a misquotation of which even good authors are sometimes guilty. The correct quotation is "When Greek joins Greek, then is the tug of war." It means that when two of the same temperament face each other, then begins strife.

**GREEN.** As noun it denotes ignorance, simplicity, as in the phrase "Do you see any green in my eye" meaning "do you take me for a fool." As adjective it means inexperienced, and Shakespeare uses it in this sense. A fresh or inexperienced person is also called "green-horn." As verb it means to hoax, to swindle. An inexperienced workman who fills the place of a striker is called a "greener." "The green-eyed monster." This metaphor is used by Shakespeare to signify "jealousy." "Green as grass." Those who are gullible and easily taken in are called green as grass.

**GREYHOUND.** One might think that this species of dogs takes its name from its colour, but it is not so, as it is derived from the Icelandic *Greyhundur*, grey meaning a dog, and *hunder* meaning a hound. Hence a greyhound is a hunting dog.

**GRIEF.** This word comes from the French *grief*, and is derived from a vulgar Latin *grevis* meaning heavy (for *gravis*). This spelling *grevis* is due to the Latin word *levis* which means light. Hence to be heavy-hearted is to be grievous. "To come to grief." It means to fail utterly or to be ruined.

**GRIEVED, SORRY.** The word grievous has in it the element of sympathy on the part of the person speaking, but it certainly implied no sympathy at all at a time when offenders were sentenced to be "grievously, whipped." The word "sorry," however, refers to a matter concerning oneself. We are sorry when we neglect answering a letter, and we are grieved on hearing of the death of a relative or a friend.

**GRIMACE.** "From *grima*, the Anglo-Saxon word for mask. The ancient comic masks were so distorted, that any hideous, forbidding, or distorted expressions of the face were likened to a *grima*; hence grimace." Fox Talbot.

**GRIN.** "Grinning like a Cheshire cat." The people of Cheshire gave the cheese they made the look of grinning cats. The phrase is applied to those who grin like these cats.

**GRIND.** This word as noun and verb enters into various University phrases. As noun, (a) A grind is a walk, a constitutional, hence, to take a grind, to take a walk; (b) Daily routine work which is more or less distasteful; (c) "A grind" is a plodding student; (d) In America "a public grind" is a demonstration given to a class and free to all, and a "private grind" is that for which a student pays an individual teacher. Hence a grinder is a private tutor, a coach. As verb, it means to prepare for an examination. A "gerund-grinder" is a schoolmaster.

**GROAN.** This word is allied to "grin."

**GROCER.** Though this word is now used to denote a dealer in sugar, fruits, tea &c., it originally meant a wholesale

dealer, who sold his goods *en gros* i.e. in unbroken packages. Minshew is of opinion that grocer is derived from *grossis* meaning figs, and hence grocer originally was one who traded in figs. But this does not seem probable.

**GROG.** The Navy gave rise to this word in the eighteenth century and it came to signify a mixture of spirit and water.

**GROTESQUE.** The Italian *grottesca* means curious painted work, for instance, the kind of painted work which was employed on the walls of grottoes. Hence grotesque signifies ludicrous.

**GROUCHY.** Slangily used for sulky.

**GROW.** This word is allied to "green," which is the colour of growing herbs, and the word "grow" especially signifies to produce shoots such as herbs. The verb "to grow" for "to become" is often used, as, in the phrase "to grow smaller," and in this sense it has been used by such famous writers as Macaulay, Steele, Johnson and Gray. One cannot see any objection to its being used in that sense.

**GROWLER.** Slang for a four-wheeled cab.

**GRUB.** As noun it means food, and Dickens uses it in this sense in *Oliver Twist*. Note "grub" and "bub" which means victuals and drink, "humming bub" at one time signifying "sparkling ale." At American University "a grub" is a student who works hard and it is also so used in England. In cricket "a grub" is a ball that is delivered along the ground, grounder or under-hand bowling. As verb it means to eat, from "grub" meaning food; and it also signifies to study hard from "a grub," a hard-working student. Another meaning is to beg, ask alms, especially food. "Grubby," a diminutive of "grub," is sometimes used for food, and as adjective it signifies slovenly, dirty, as applied to persons. "Grub Street." Nearly 150 years ago this street in London was the haunt of penny-a-liners, and other literary hacks. This term is now colloquially applied to a literary hack or a worthless book. "Grub Street authors." Originally Milton's street was known as Grub Street, where many poor literary men resided in the time of Pope. They were called "Grub Street authors" out of contempt by their more fortunate brethren.

**GUARANTEE, WARRANTY.** These two terms are not synonyms. When A promises B that if C does not pay B £50 that C owes B, then A will pay B. This is a guarantee. Warranty is an express or implied undertaking on vendor's part that thing sold is vendor's and is fit for use or fulfils specified conditions. Guarantee should not be confused with indemnity. A contract between A and B that if B has to pay C, A will repay B is an indemnity.

**GUESS, CONJECTURE.** As a rule one cannot make a guess unless he has some data to go upon. Conjecture, properly speaking, signifies "the thing put together or framed in the mind without design or foundation."

**GUILD.** A guild is an association or incorporation of men for mutual aid or prosecution of common object. The word guild comes from the Anglo-Saxon *gild*, a payment, and hence, it literally means an association where payment was made for its protection and support. The letter *u* in the English spelling of the word is superfluous, the correct form being "gild." During the Middle Ages guilds were associations among the commercial and industrial classes. Although the term was more appropriate to the associations which flourished during the Middle Ages, modern guilds are not entirely different from the old ones. "Guildhall" is a town or Corporation-hall *i.e.* a meeting place of Corporation.

**GUILLOTINE.** An instrument used in France for capital punishments. It is named after Joseph Ignac Guillotin by whom it was brought into use in France. Before its introduction a similar apparatus was in use called "The Maiden." (Parliamentary.) No large controversial measure can now be carried without a "time-table." The various clauses are mapped out and so many hours are allotted to each. When the clock strikes, the debate comes at once to a conclusion, and the clause is put from the Chair. Private members' amendments are all swept away, but Government amendments, discussed or undiscussed, are voted on (and usually carried). This plan is called "the guillotine."—P. W. W.—*Everybody's Guide to Parliament.*

**GUILT.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *gylt* meaning a fine, and originally wrong-doing could be expiated by the payment of money. But Trench says "to find guilt in a man is to find that he has been beguiled by the devil."

**GUINEA.** It is so called because it was first made in Guinea.

**GULL.** As a noun it means one who can be easily cheated, *i.e.* a dupe. Gull is a yellow bird of a helpless nature, and hence the verb "to gull" is nothing but a metaphorical allusion to the helplessness of an infant gull. From this we also have the word "gullible." Shakespeare uses the word "gull" as a noun in the sense of a dupe in *Twelfth Night*.

**GULLIVER.** This name of Swift's imaginary hero in his work *Gulliver's Travels* comes from the words Gull-i-ver, meaning to gull in truth.

**GUMPTION.** (Colloquial.) Common sense or sagacity. The word is derived from the old verb to gaum, to understand. "Oh, he is full of gumption" means "Oh, he is a man of common sense."

**GUSH.** It is commonly used for an exaggerated show of sentiment, and a "gusher" is one who gushes over a person or a

thing *i.e.* one who shows his approval in an exaggerated form. "Gushing" is used more in a repellent sense and is usually applied to those whose professions of attachment or of approval are carried too far.

**GUY.** Guy is the Christian name of the notorious Guy Fawkes, connected with the Gunpowder Plot in the reign of James I. Even now every year on the 5th November an effigy of Guy Fawkes is made and burnt in England, and it is called "guy." Hence "guy" has become synonymous for a hideous creature, an ill-dressed person, a person of queer dress or looks. In theatrical parlance "to guy" is to condemn an actor or a new play, literally to ridicule as one would a "guy." In common parlance it is used to signify to distort, the allusion being to the ugly and distorted appearance of the effigy of Guy Fawkes.

**GYMNASIUM.** The word comes from *gymnos*, naked, and in Greece the public places where youths resorted not only for physical exercise, but for conversation and philosophical discussion were called gymnasium. In the latter sense of the word, the upper school in Germany where students are mostly instructed in classical tongues is called gymnasium, but this name is not given to schools either in England or in India, though it can be properly done.

**GYMNASTICS.** Like "gymnasium" it comes from *gymnos*, naked, stripped, and although all athletic sports can be included under the head of gymnastics according to the derivation of the word, outdoor games such as cricket, football and tennis are excluded. The term is now restrictedly applied to certain physical exercises devised to strengthen the muscles and bones, especially those of the upper half of the body.

## H.

**HABERDASHER.** A pedlar or one who sells small wares. This word is derived from "hapertas," a material of which hats were made at one time. Hence originally haberdasher meant one who sold hats. (Haberdasher of hats.) But Chambers says "berdash" was a name formerly used in England for a certain kind of neck-dress, and hence a person who made or sold such neck-cloths was called a "berdasher," from which is derived our word "haberdasher." But Dr. Brewer in *The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* gives the first derivation of the word.

**HABIT, CUSTOM, USAGE.** Habit refers exclusively to the individual, custom to a race or a nation, and usage is that which becomes habitual practice when it becomes sanctioned by a custom.

**HACKNEY-COACH.** This name is derived from the French *coche-a-haquence*, a vehicle drawn by a hired horse.

**HAD BETTER, WOULD BETTER.** "Had better" is always preferred to "would better," although, strictly speaking, the latter form is most correct.

**HAFT.** The handle of a knife or of any other implement of a similar kind is so called. French says "haft, as of a knife, is properly, only the participle perfect of 'to have,' that wherewith you have, or hold it."

**HAGGARD.** (a) Said of a wild hawk, and (b) of a lean, meagre person. In its (b) sense, the word is really the same as (a).

**HAIL.** This comes from the Anglo-Saxon *hœl* meaning health, and is used as an exclamation of greeting.

**HAIR.** "To a hair" or "to the turn of a hair." To a nicety. Every sentence that he uttered he weighed to the turn of a hair. "Without turning a hair." Without showing any sign of fatigue. It requires great physical power to work hard at a problem without turning a hair. "Against the hair." Against the grain. "If you should fight, you go against the hair of your professions."—Shakespeare—*Merry Wives of Windsor*. "Hair of a dissembling colour." Red hair is so called, because Judas, the traitor, was supposed to have red hair. "A hair of the dog that bit you." Another drop of the same liquor which you drank last night in order to pull you together. It was firmly believed at one time and that belief is still common that when a person is bitten by a dog, if he applies a hair of the dog that had bitten him to the wound, it would heal it. "To comb one's hair the wrong way." To vex one by opposing his opinions or prejudices. "Hair-splitting." The act or practice of making minute distinctions in reasoning. During my stay in England, at the suggestion of an Indian friend of mine, I ordered a suit with Savoy tailors. While trying on the suit, I made some objections to its cut, &c., whereupon the cutter said "Sir, you are splitting the hair." "The great events are often drawn by hairs." Events of great importance are oftentimes caused by things which are in themselves quite insignificant.

**HAKE.** "We lose in hake, but gain in herring." We lose in one way, but gain in another. Herrings are persecuted by the hakes, which are therefore driven away from a herring-fishery.—Dr. Brewer.

**HALBERD.** The weapon so called derived its name from the Teutonic *hild* meaning battle, and *barta* meaning axe.

**HALCYON DAYS.** Calm, peaceful times. Halcyon means a kingfisher, and it was a superstitious notion among the



Greeks that the weather was calm when kingfishers were breeding, and hence the expression.

**HALE.** As a verb it means to pull or draw violently. This word is corrupted into haul in familiar language.

**HALF.** Originally "half" signified any part, and the expression "four halves" meaning four parts is old English. The expression "half and half" means undecided. It also means half drunk *i.e.* screwed. "Half a crack." Half a second. Similar expressions are "in a tick," "in a jiffy," "in a kick." "To see with half an eye." To discern easily, be quick at conclusions. "Half-baked" (or soft-baked). Lacking in intelligence, half-witted. "Half-rocked" properly means ridiculous, though it is employed to signify wholly foolish. "Half-cracked" is the same as "half-rocked." "Half-shaved" is weak-minded or shallow-brained. "Half-mourning." The expression "to have one's eye in half-mourning" means to have a black eye from a blow; and the expression "to have one's eye in full mourning" signifies to have two black eyes. "Half-seas over." It was originally a nautical term, loosely applied to various degrees of inebriety. It has now become common among all classes, and has been used by Swift. It is a corruption of the Dutch *opzee zoher*, "over-sea beer," a kind of a very strong beverage. Synonymous terms are "half-screwed," "half way on one's course," the latter being seldom used now; "half-cut"; "half on" &c. "Half-crowner." A publication costing two shillings and sixpence is so called.

**HALFPENNY.** "I am come back again, like a bad halfpenny." I have come back to you, whether you will have me or not, and you can't get rid of me. The reference is to the bad halfpenny which is returned to its owner.

**HALL.** (University.) A general term for the common dinner which is taken in college hall. Hence the verb "to hall" means to dine. "Hall of the Sea" is the examination hall of the conjoint Board of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, the allusion being to its situation on the Embankment at the foot of the Waterloo Bridge. "Hall of delight." A music-hall. "Go and hire a hall." When a person borrows you to death with his talk, you use this expression by way of retort.

**HALLOW.** This word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *halig*, holy, and is connected with "hale," "heal," "holy," and "whole." About 200 years ago this word fell into disuse, but is commonly employed now. It was at one time used in the place of "Saint" *e.g.* All Hallows (All Saints), Hallowmas, &c.

**HALO.** This word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *halig*, holy. From the Anglo-Saxon *halig* we have the verb "to halo" and the noun "halo." At first "halo" was employed to denote

the "glories" represented by artists around the heads of Saints, but now it is applied to a circle of refracted light round the sun or the moon.

**HAMFATTER.** (American.) A third-rate actor or variety performer. A similar expression is "barn-stormer" (which see).

**HAMLET.** The diminutive of the Anglo-Saxon *ham*, meaning a home.

**HAMMER.** "To hammer" (cricket). In the game of cricket "to hammer" is to hit hard, hence, a "hammerer" is a hard hitter or slogger. (Stock Exchange.) To declare one a defaulter. (Common.) To beat, punish, ill-treat, and hence hammering means excessive beating. (Printers.) Compositors use the slang "hammering" for charging more hours than actually engaged on a particular job and thus cheating. As a noun it means an enormous falsehood, an unblushing lie, and in this sense it is synonymous with crammer and clincher (which see). In contradistinction to this ladies and children call a petty falsehood a "tarradiddle." "At the hammer." An article put up for sale at auction is said to be "at or under the hammer," "under the hammer" being more commonly used. "Hammer-headed." One who is stupid is so called. "To bring a thing to the hammer." To sell it by auction. The same as "to sell under the hammer." "Hammer and tongs." Force used and used over and over again. It has a reference to the blacksmith's work which consists in hammering time after time the glowing iron which is held by the tongs. "He went at it hammer and tongs" means he went at it energetically and recklessly. "Hammer-cloth." The covering of the "box" or seat of the driver of the coach. It is generally believed that the term arose from the contents of the box (which contained a hammer and other tools) to be used in case of an accident or breakdown. Hence also the "box-seat" that is the seat over the box.

**HAMMOCK.** (North American Indian.) It means a bed.

**HAND.** "Hands off." A vulgar phrase used in the sense of to keep off; to forbear. Girls often use this expression when a man touches them with the hands.

**HANDICAP.** This is not an old word in the English language. Even Nuttall's Dictionary which is considered to be quite up-to-date only explains it by saying that it is "a kind of phrase." It is a corruption of "hand in cap" which has a reference to the drawing of lots out of a hat or a cap. To give a handicap in a contest is to make it even either by giving a point of advantage to an inferior competitor or by giving a point of disadvantage to a superior competitor.

**HANDIWORK.** It does not mean skilful or ingenious, as it

comes from the Anglo-Saxon *hand-geweorc* meaning hand-work.

**HANDKERCHIEF.** A kerchief or a coverchief (French) was a small piece of cloth to cover the head with. When fashionable people thought of carrying something in their hands, the word "handkerchief" was coined without any regard of the proper sense of the word "kerchief."

**HANDLE.** "To give a handle to." To supply with an occasion. Having no visible means of subsistence and yet riding a horse, he gave a handle to suspicion. "A handle to one's name." A title. He has got a handle to his name. It was originally a military term. "To go off the handle." To die. He wants to make a name before he goes off the handle. "To take the long handle." To adopt severe and stringent measures. In cricket it means to adopt a forceful tactics. When he saw that others on his side could do very little, he took the long handle *i.e.* he tried to push the game by hitting.

**HANDSOME.** Originally this word meant handy or that which was ready to the hand, and it had nothing whatever to do with its modern meaning "beautiful." Later on it was applied to one who was dexterous or handy, so that a handsome man was one who could turn his hand to anything.

**HANDY-MAN.** A term applied to British sailors who can turn their hands to anything under all circumstances. It also signifies a person who is employed to do various kinds of work.

**HANG.** As noun it means general drift, tendency or bent, as in the phrase "to get the hang of a thing" *i.e.* to acquire the knack or knowledge of a thing, the reference being to the adjusting of tools to their handles, which is known as hanging. As verb, it is an exclamation of vexation, disappointment or disgust; also, more forcibly, euphemistic oath, as in the phrase "hang it!" "To hang out" is to dwell or reside, in allusion to the ancient custom of hanging out signs, and at American University the noun "hang out" is used to signify a feast or entertainment. In common parlance "to hang up" is to postpone or leave undecided, as in the political phrase "to hang up a bill" *i.e.* to pass through one or more of its stages, and then to lay it aside for further consideration for an indefinite period. "To hang it up" is an American expression for "to charge to one's account," the allusion being to the custom of chalking it (the account) behind the door. "To hang off" is to fight shy of anything. It is an expression often used by printers when they want to reject or avoid the printing of anything objectionable. "Hang by a thread." It means to be in a very precarious position of imminent danger. The reference is to the sword of Damocles (which see). "Hang up one's fiddle" (American.) It means "to give it up." In England

it is used in a different sense with a slight alteration in the phrase. "To hang up one's fiddle with one's hat" is spoken of a man who, while merry and bright abroad, is churlish and disagreeable at home.

**HANGAR.** French word meaning a shed which accommodates vehicles of any kind. Since the aeronautics have been developed, this word has been restricted to mean a shed for accommodating airships.

**HANGER-ON.** (Colloquial.) A parasite.

**HANGED, HUNG.** The verb hang has two participles "hung" and "hanged." The former is applied to inanimate objects and the latter to the animate objects.

**HANKER.** Hanker seems to be a corruption of hunger, and to hanker after a thing means to hunger after a thing. "We desire that which is near at hand and long for that within view, but we hanker after pleasures which are denied, which have been once enjoyed."

**HANSARD.** The authorised publications of the Parliamentary Debates are so called after the name of Luke Hansard (1752) who worked as a compositor to the printer of the House of Commons. Hansard *versus* Stockdale is a well-known case in the Constitutional history of England.

**HANSEL.** It means a bribe or gift, the first money received in a day. Hence to "hansel" a sword means to use it for the first time, and "hanselling" a coat means wearing it for the first time.

**HANSOM-CAB.** It is so named after its inventor. Hansom, the inventor, was a Birmingham architect. In appearance the cab resembles the sedan chair with this difference that the former is drawn by a horse. This cab has now been supplanted by taxi-cabs.

**HAPPEN.** "To happen in." A colloquial expression meaning "to drop in casually," as one passes by.

**HAPPY.** "As happy as an umbrella maker." This expression has sprang up recently. Instead of saying "as happy as a sand-boy," people in England now use the expression "as happy as an umbrella maker." I have been unable to trace the origin of this expression. "As happy as the day is long" is another similar expression.

**HARANGUE.** This French word literally means a speech delivered in the ring. Formerly it was *harengue*, and this is old High German *hring*, the same as the English ring, *i.e.* the ring of the circle formed by the audience.

**HARBINGER.** This word as a rule is used in poetry in the sense of one who announces the coming or the appearance of another. But the original meaning of the word was one who prepared a "harbour" for another, and his announcing the

near approach of another was merely an accidental consequence of his office. He prepared a "harbour" *i.e.* a lodging for another.

**HARBOUR.** The verb "to harbour" originally signified in a general way "to receive as guest," "to give shelter," "to entertain." But as criminals came to be harboured by their friends in their own houses to shield them from penalties, the word "harbour" came to have a sort of odium attached to it. Hence now-a-days "harbouring" a person or a thing is sheltering a person or a thing that ought not to be sheltered. We harbour evil thoughts or a criminal, but never good thoughts or a good man.

**HARD.** Thieves used "hard" for hard labour. Instead of saying "he got one month's hard labour," they say "he got one month's hard." "Hard bargain" is a nautical expression for a bullying officer, and it is commonly used for a lazy fellow or a skulker. In nautical phraseology a bullying officer is also called "a hard horse." "Hard bargain" is often used as synonymous with "hard case" in the sense of a lazy fellow, but the latter is stronger than the former conveying the idea as it does of shamelessness and hopelessness of the person from whom nothing can be expected. A defaulting debtor, however, may be properly called either "a hard bargain" or "a hard case" without any distinction. In America "hard case" is a colloquial expression for a person of a curious type. "Hard cheese" is a term especially used at billiards with the meaning of hard lines or no luck. "Hard lines," though used in the sense of "ill-luck," does, it should be noted, properly mean hardship or difficulty. It is a soldier's term for hard duty on the lines in front of the enemy. The Editor of *Notes and Queries* proves that "Lines" was formerly a synonym for "lots," and quotes Ps. xvi. 6—"The lines are fallen into me in pleasant places," and with this Bible version he compares the Prayer-Book version: "the lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground." "Hard neck" is a phrase employed to signify colossal cheek and impudence. "Hard nut" is a dangerous antagonist. In America drinks which are decidedly intoxicating are called "hard drinks," while soda-water, ginger beer and the like are called soft drinks. "A hard drinker" is one who can stand a lot as they say, *i.e.* one who can drink lots of glasses at a time, whereas "a hardened drunkard" is a confirmed drunkard. "Hard-shell" is one who is thoroughly conservative in religion or politics. The old-fashioned Baptists in Georgia were at first designated by this name. The term "soft-shell" is applied to one who is liberal in his views in politics or religion. "Hard stuff" is an Australian term for intoxicating liquors, as "he cannot drink hard stuff." I have heard students in England call examination papers which they find difficult "hard stuff." The expression "hard up"

is colloquially used for "short of money." The term is also applied to the man who picks up cigar-ends in the streets in order to sell them as tobacco to the very poor after having dried them.

**HARDY.** When applied to persons, this word signifies "enduring, indifferent to fatigue, hunger, cold," &c. But once it had a wider meaning of "bold" which it only retains now, in its relation to things, and not persons. A hardy assertion is a bold assertion.

**HAREM.** It comes from the Arabic "Haram" meaning Sacred. The ladies' apartments and their occupants in a Mahomedan household are so called.

**HARPY.** Vulture with the face of woman, and foul long claws is so called. Vultures are very filthy creatures. A rapacious person is called harpy. "He is a regular harpy." He is a man who wants to appropriate everything. Shakespeare uses this word harpy in *Much Ado About Nothing* in the said sense.

**HARUM-SCARUM.** It is one of those "ricochet" words in which the English language abounds and it is used both as an adjective and as a noun to denote a rash person. In all probability we get this word from the two verbs "to hare" meaning to excite, to worry, and "to scare" meaning to frighten.

**HASH.** Originally it means a dish of meat cut into slices. A mess, confusion; especially in the phrase "to make up a hash of a thing." "To hash up" is to jumble together without any regard to regularity or order.

**HASTEN, HURRY.** Hasten does not imply confusion, whereas hurry does. The former is not irregular, because one who hastens to do a thing considers beforehand what he is going to do. A thing done in a hurry may be done without consideration, and therefore may be done in an irregular manner. We hasten to congratulate a friend, but hurry to catch a train.

**HATE.** Chaucer in The "Persones Tale" defines "hate" thus:—"Hate is olde wrathe."

**HAUGHTY.** It comes from the French *haut*, meaning high.

**HAUL.** "Hauled over the coals." Getting severely scolded for behaving in an unjustifiable manner. The reference is to the trial by ordeal during the times of Anglo-Saxons.

**HAVERSACK.** Haver is a common term for oats in Westmoreland where oatcakes are generally called havercakes. Hence haversack literally means a sack for containing oats. Now this word is applied to a linen bag in which the soldiers carry their rations.

**HAWK.** "To hawk." It means to carry about for sale. It is formed from the substantive "hawker" meaning a pedlar. Figuratively it has come to mean to search for.

Authors, as a rule, have to hawk the right sort of publisher *i.e.* they have to try one publisher after another till they hit upon the right one.

**HAWKER.** A hawker is a pedlar or a huckster who hawks about goods for sale. The etymology of the word is doubtful. Some think that it comes from the German *hoken* meaning to carry, while others incline to the belief that it refers to the old Dutch *hucken*, to stoop, and that it is cognate with "huckster" and "huckle."

**HAZE.** In England "to haze" means to annoy intentionally a subordinate by unnecessary, contradictory orders. In America the word expresses physical as well as mental cruelty which is practised on fresh students in Universities and military or naval schools. "Hazy." This word is applied to one who is intoxicated, from the idea of things appearing hazy to him in that state.

**HEALTHFUL, HEALTHY.** Anything healthful is that which promotes health; anything healthy denotes the condition of being in health. We say "healthful weather," and "healthy child."

**HEAP.** This word is sometimes used in the sense of a "large number." A heap literally is a collection of things piled up, as a heap of coins or a heap of books.

**HEAR, HEAR, HEAR.** A common form of cheers, complimentary or otherwise, in Parliament. One never hears, "Hurrah" or "Bravo" in the Houses.

**HEARSE.** It is derived from the old French *herse*, a triangular frame. It was the custom to carry a dead body to the church in a frame with candle-fittings, and gradually the coffin itself came to be called a "hearse."

**HEARTY.** This is really a beautiful word signifying that which comes straight from the heart, and it seems a pity that this word should be loosely used in its application. How often we say "heartly appetite."

**HEAVEN.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *heofon* and is connected with the English word *heave* meaning raised or lifted up, and as the skies are overhead, they are called "heaven."

**HEAVY.** It literally means hard to heave, and hence heavy.

**HECKLE.** This is the same as "hackle" and hence it originally means to dress with a heckle, and figuratively it has come to mean to tease or vex. Its Southern form *hatchell* was commonly used in Middle English in its proper sense of teasing. This word came to be used in its political sense in 1880, and according to the *New English Dictionary* this word was applied by *Punch* to the Fourth Party. This word is an example of a dialect word.

**HECKLING.** It conveys the idea of a mercilessly searching examination to which a candidate is subjected.

**HECTOR.** To "hector" is to bully or to swagger and some believe that there is in this an allusion to the Trojan warrior Hector, although those who have read the *Iliad* know that Hector was a brave and noble-minded patriot, anything but a braggart and blusterer. Others think that it is a corruption of "heckler" meaning one who harasses and annoys and this explanation seems more probable. This word when used as a plural was applied to street bullies whose sole delight was to use offensive language especially to women with a view to gain notoriety.

**HEDGE-SCHOOL.** Formerly in the rural districts of Ireland it was the custom to have an open-air school and it was called "hedge-school" because it was conducted under a hedge. From this we have the phrase hedge-priest meaning "a poor, illiterate cleric admitted to Holy Orders direct from a 'hedge-school,' without having attended any theological college."

**HEFTY.** Very large; big. "Everybody is still expressing wonderment concerning the nature of the details which the Marquis of Northampton suppressed at the eleventh hour by submission to the demand for so hefty a sum as fifty thousand pounds."—*London Opinion*, 1913.

**HELP.** It is used in two contradictory senses, namely that of assisting and of refraining. When we help a friend in need, we assist him; but when we cannot help doing a thing we mean that we cannot refrain from doing it and therefore must do it.

**HELP, ASSIST, SUCCOUR.** Help is a generic term and the most common of the three. Assist originally meant "to stand by or be present at (or with)" and in this sense it is still used in French. To succour is to help a person, when he or she is in danger or in difficulties.

**HEN-PARTY.** A social gathering of ladies is so called vulgarly.

**HERD.** When this word is used to denote a number of animals feeding together, the use is quite correct. It is also indiscriminately applied to persons, as, for instance, the vulgar herd in reference to the lower classes who are disorderly. It means (a) a flock, and (b) one who tends a herd. In its (b) sense it occurs usually in compound words such as shepherd, cow-herd.

**HEY-PRESTO.** It is properly a conjurer's phrase of command, and hence used to announce surprising transformation &c. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., "the evergreen journalist" as he is called, is very fond of this expression. "Men might lay their plans carefully, might pursue them relentlessly for years, might just have the mighty prize within their grasp, and



hey-presto; up came the god, chance, and throw the whole mighty fabric in the dust."—*Reynolds' Newspaper*, 1913. Presto as an adverb is used interjectionally for "quickly," "immediately," "in haste." As a music term it signifies a direction for quick lively movement or performance.

**HIDE.** The use of the verb hide in sense of to flog is entirely colloquial.

**HIGGLE.** To be slow in making a bargain, and is merely a weakened form of haggle, to bargain.

**HIGGLEDY-PIGGLEDY.** In confusion, at sixes and sevens. This phrase occurs in Charles Dickens's novel *David Copperfield*.

**HIGH.** "High words." Angry words. "High tea." Tea with meat, &c. in substitution of dinner. A common expression in England.

**HIGHFALUTE.** It is an American slang and means to use fine words or yarns. Whence "highfaluting," meaning bombast. As adjective it means bombastic or fustian, and is applied to language which is high-flown and also to a stuck-up and showy sort of person. According to Bartlett, it is derived from high "fighting," though the majority of etymologists do not agree with him. Some think that it comes from the Dutch *Verlotten*, a term used in America to signify bombastic or high-flown language. Although originally American, this word has become current in England so much so that *The Times* often uses it.

**HILARITY, JUBILATION.** Hilarity is mirth, while jubilation is joy that gives vent to itself in shout. The Greek word *hilaros* means mirthful from which we have exhilarate and hilarity. Hilarity is a state in which one feels the pleasurable excitement of animal spirits. Hilary term (a law term) is so called from the festival of St. Hilary, and it commences near the 13th January on which day St. Hilary died. Jubilation which consists in exalting or rejoicing or shouting and singing with joy comes from the Latin *jubilatio*, shout of joy, and is quite distinct from jubilee.

**HISS.** It should be noted that while Indian papers use the expression "hooting and hissing," London papers use the expression "booing and hissing."

**HIT.** "Hitting the nail on the head." Doing the right thing at the right moment. Sometimes wrongly used as "hitting the right nail on the head."

**HOAX.** It is short for hocus, to juggle, cheat. "Hocus-pocus" is merely an invented word used by jugglers when they perform their tricks. It means a juggler's trick, a juggler. "To hocus" is to hoax.

**HOB-NOB.** This is a corruption of the old "hab-nab" from the Anglo-Saxon "habben" meaning to have, and "nabban"

meaning not to have. Shakespearo uses it in the modern sense of "give" or "take" in his *Twelfth Night* thus :—

"Hob-nob is his word :  
Give 't or take 't."

This word is now used in the sense of being familiar or intimate with. In my opinion it is very difficult to understand an Englishman unless you have hobnobbed with him for a number of years in his own country.

**HOBSON'S CHOICE.** Anything which is forced upon one, whether one likes it or not, is termed "Hobson's choice." Hobson, a noted carrier in Cambridge, never allowed his customers to choose the horses they liked, but insisted upon a customer taking the horse nearest the stable door and so on in rotation.

**HOIST.** "Hoist with his own petard." It means caught in his own trap. The petard was an old infernal engine fitted with gunpowder and he who fired it stood the risk of blowing himself up. Shakespearo has it in *Hamlet*. (See Frankenstein.)

**HOLD.** "Holding out the Olive Branch." Signifying peace and good-will. Amongst the ancient Greeks the olive branch was the symbol of peace, like our modern white flag. "Holding a candle to the Devil." Paying mock respect to a person from motives of gain. Among low classes of London one hears this expression.

**HOLIDAY.** It was at first Holy day, just as husband was originally housebond, Christmas Christ's Mass, and Gospel Godspel.

**HOLOCAUST.** Lexicographers erroneously describe this word as that which signifies "any great disaster." Strictly speaking, it should not be so, because the word comes from the Greek *holos* meaning entire, and *kanstos* meaning burnt, and its principal meaning is "a sacrificial offering burnt whole or entirely consumed." Destruction by fire is so called figuratively, but not, strictly speaking, a shipwreck or a collision.

**HOLY.** This word means "morally excellent," and also "set apart for the service of God." Therefore it is absurd to criticise the phrase "to keep holy the Sabbath day," because this injunction literally means to keep the day which is set apart for the service of God. The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon and means whole.

**HOLY MACKEREL.** This expression which is commonly used to denote surprise should be avoided by refined people.

**HOMAGE.** It is derived from the Latin *homo*, man, and signifies the service made by a vassal to his master. From the day the vassal does "homage" to his lord, he becomes his "man."

**HOME RULE.** The phrase "Home Rule," as applied to the Irish question, was invented by the Reverend Joseph Allen Galbraith, Professor of Trinity College, Dublin, who died in 1890.—The Rambler in *The Daily Mirror*, dated the 26th March, 1914.

**HOMERIC LAUGHTER.** Loud and ungovernable laughter, caused by the occurrence of some ridiculous event. The heroes in the *Iliad* of Homer were noted for their "unquenchable" laughter.

**HONEST.** This word is allied to honour.

**HONEYMOON.** It is really "honeymonth." In ancient times it was the custom among the Northern nations of Europe to drink mead (a kind of wine made from honey) for thirty days after marriage and hence the expression.

**HOOK.** "To take the hook." To quit without notice of leave, as "the servant took the hook."

**HOOLIGANISM.** Violent conduct of the lower orders who make themselves a perfect pest to the public by their outrageous behaviour in the streets. In the nineteenth century there was a rough character called Hooligan, who earned notoriety for his violent outrages.

**HOPE.** It means (a) expectation, and (b) a troop, as in the phrase "a forlorn hope" which literally means lost-band.

**HORDE.** This word means a troop or a gang or a crew. Although it is sometimes applied to things, it is not correct.

**HORNS OF A DILEMMA.** Applied to a situation in which a person is puzzled over two conflicting lines of conduct, so much so that he cannot weigh the pros and cons.

**HORSE.** A slang term for a five pound note, just as "monkey" is for five hundred pounds. It is worthy of note that England has the most copious list of slang terms for the coins of the realm and in this respect she stands by herself. "Horse editor" in America is one who furnishes a paper with sporting news. He is so called, because in the United States they never use the term "reporter" which perhaps they do not consider as befitting the dignity of a gentleman connected with the Press. Not only the proprietor, manager or director of a paper is called an editor, but everyone who writes for it. A "horse-laugh" is a loud, noisy laugh, or guffaw, as they call it. In America they call him who grabs at and gains what he aims at, a man with "horse teeth." "Tell that to the horse-marines." (Which see.) "Horse-sense" means sound and practical judgment. W. B. Howells uses this expression in his *Hazard of New Fortunes* in the sense of "rough common sense." The term "horsey" is applied to one who is a lover of horses or who affects such dress as is worn on the turf with its peculiar cut and style. It is also applied to one who affects a turf conversation.

"Horse Shoe." A horse-shoe is considered to be a token of good luck and although this superstition is handed down by the Saxon race, it has been proved that the early Christians used to hang a horse-shoe on the doors of their houses to 'show' their religious faith, and they placed the horse-shoe at a certain angle, making it look like the initial letter of Christus. (Christ.) "To flog a dead horse." To cause an agitation with a view to receive an interest in a subject long since forgotten and gone out of date. "Horse-play." A colloquial expression for any kind of rough play or amusement. "One horse." An American expression meaning petty, or in a small way. "Oh, well, Rhode Island is a one-horse state, where everybody pays taxes and goes to church."—William Black. "On one's high horse." Puffed up or arrogant. That fellow always seems to be on his high horse. "Horse-faced." Having a long, coarse face. "Horse power." A measure of power. This engine is a hundred and fifty horse power. "It is a good horse that never stumbles." "Everyone has his faults." "When the horse is stolen, lock the stable-door." A similar expression is "after beef, mustard." "A dark horse" (turf). A horse of whom the public knows nothing as a racer. "That horse is on the easy list" (turf). Owing to some temporary disability, that horse is given rest from his daily exercise at gallops.

**HOSPITAL.** It literally means a large 'house. It is allied to hostel.

**HOT.** As noun it means a crowd, and at Winchester College, it signifies a mellay at foot-ball. As adjective, when applied to persons, it denotes excitability and lecherousness; when applied to things, (as books) it signifies obscene. As verb, it means to crowd or to mob, from its use in the sense of a mellay at football at Winchester College. The colloquial expression "to give it hot to one" means to take one to task severely. Another form is to "make it hot for one." Both these expressions convey the idea of putting one into trouble.

**HOTTENTOT.** Member of South African race, which is noted for its inferiority in intellect. Hence, figuratively, it means person of inferior intellect or culture, a boor. One often hears in England the expression "he is a perfect Hottentot," meaning he is quite rude and uncultured.

**HUBBY.** A term of endearment for husband.

**HUCKSTER.** This word is named after "a huxter." Huckster has now come to mean any petty dealer, and huckster's shop is what Londoners call a chandler's shop.

**HUFF.** "To take the huff." To be offended; to be sulky. "In a huff" means in a fit of petulance, as "he is in a huff" meaning he is feeling cross.

**HUGGER-MUGGER.** This is one of those duplicated phrases the exact origin of which defies solution. Dr. Brewer in

his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* says "to hugger" is to lie in ambush, from the Danish "hug"; "Mugger" is the Danish "smug," clandestinely, whence our word smuggle. The primary meaning of this word is clandestinely, and the secondary meaning is disorderly or in a slovenly manner. Shakespeare in his *Hamlet* and Butler in his *Hudibras* use this phrase. As a rule a thing done in hugger-mugger smacks of slyness. The rooks were all hugger-mugger means they were disorderly.

**HUMAN, HUMANE.** Until the beginning of the 18th century, the word "human" was spelt humane. Then, however, the word human had reference to what men are and humane had reference to what they ought to be.

**HUMBLE-BEE.** Called also bumble-bee. It is a corruption of the German *hummel* bee, meaning the buzzing bee.

**HUMBUG.** This word was believed by Dr. Johnson to be non-existent, but as a matter of fact it was in use in the seventeenth century. In a letter from Mann to Walpole, in 1760, the writer speaking of *Tristram Shandy*, uses the word "humbugging." This word has been credited with many derivations. One of these was dealt with in the *Berwick Advertiser*.—"It is not generally known that this word is of Scottish origin. There was in olden time a race called Bougue of that ilk in Berwickshire. A daughter of the family married a Hume. In progress of time the Bougue estate devolved on one George Hume whose name was popularly pronounced "Hum o' the bug." Mr. Hume was inclined to the marvellous, and exalted himself, his wife and all his ancestors on both sides. His tales did not however pass current, and at length, when anyone in the neighbourhood made any extraordinary statement, the hearer would shrug his shoulders and say it was just a "hum o' the bug." This was shortened into humbug. The second is that in 1777 there lived a famous dancing master by name Mr. Humbug who indulged in giving himself great airs by advertising himself in high-flown language. The third is what a correspondent in *Notes and Queries* (March 5th 1892) writes that this word is derived from the Italian *Uomo bugiardo* meaning a lying man. The fourth is that a spurious coin called *uim bog* was used in Ireland in the reign of James II., so that *uim bog* became a general term for humbug. The fifth and the most probable one is that the word humbug is a compound of "hum" and "bug," hum signifying hoaxing, and bug meaning a sham.

**HUMORIST.** Facetious person; one who is full of humour. In England this word is used for a jocular person. But it should not be forgotten that this is the improper use of the word.

**HUMP.** "To have the hump." It is a very common slang expression meaning to be distressed, low-spirited, and "to have one's hump up" means to be cross (See "to have one's back up"). "To hump" means to grumble. A similar expression is "he is up the pole."

**HUNDRED.** In English Law, an ancient subdivision of counties was called "a hundred," probably because there were a hundred warriors or a hundred families in each. If a crime was committed, and if any property was feloniously destroyed by the perpetrators, the hundred had to make the loss good. "The Hundred Days." The period between Napoleon's landing in France after his escape from Elba (20th March 1815) and the Second Restoration (28th June 1815).

**HUNGRY.** "As hungry as a hunter." Similar expressions are "as hungry as a hawk," "as hungry as Dragon himself," the latter being used by Mrs. Garrick.

**HUNK.** "To get hunk." This vulgar phrase means to get even with one by retaliating upon him. If a person gives you a slap and you give him back two, you get hunk with him.

**HURDY-GURDY.** A kind of street organ. "Hurdy" comes from "hur" to snarl and "gurdy" is merely a rhyming addition, as "burly" is in "hurly-burly." Words similar to hurly-burly are in use in nearly all languages to express uproar and tumult.

**HURLY-BURLY.** It means uproar especially tumult of battle. "Hurly" comes from the old French *hurler* meaning to howl and "burly" is merely a rhyming addition.

**HURRICANE.** This is a Caribbean word for a high wind and is most likely an imitative sound of rushing wind.

**HURRY-SCURRY.** As in "hurly-burly" and "hurdy-gurdy" the second part of this word (that is "skurry") is a mere rhyming addition. This is one of those words that are formed to express their own meaning. As an adverb it means wildly, and as a noun it means confused haste, and it is generally used as a substantive.

**HUSBAND.** This is a compound of the Anglo-Saxon *hus* meaning a house and the Anglo-Saxon *bonda* meaning a master of a family.

**HUSBANDMAN.** Formerly the word signified one who cultivated his own land as distinguished from a farmer who was a tenant.

**HYMEN.** Bridal couples are often spoken of as "votaries of Hymen," Hymen being the mythological God of marriage. He is believed by some to be the son of Bacchus, the God of wine.

**HYPOTHEC.** In Roman law this term was in use to denote a security over goods belonging to debtor. Now this term is

employed in the law of Scotland, but not of England. Thus an attorney has a hypothec over the title-deeds of his client in respect of his bill of costs.

**HYSTERIA.** This word comes from the Greek *hystera*, the womb. This condition was so called on account of an ancient belief that it was very intimately connected with the disorders of the womb. The uterine conditions, although they may have something to do in the production of hysteria, do not, however, account for all the cases, for the disease occurs in both sexes most frequently about the time of puberty, its incidence in the females being considerably in excess of that in the males. The disease has such a variety of nervous manifestations that there is hardly a nervous disease the symptoms of which it may not simulate. The disease is hardly to be met with in uncivilised races, and it is probable that the strain of civilisation may have something to do with this production. Heredity is another predisposing factor. Severe emotional shock, such as disappointment in love, fright, sudden reverse of fortune, &c. may precipitate an attack.

## I.

**I.** "I am escaped with the skin of my teeth." This expression appears in *Job* which is perhaps the oldest of the books comprising the Bible. It means "just escaped—having lost one's belongings." The more familiar expression is "by the skin of his teeth."

**ICEBERG.** This comes from the German *eis*, meaning ice, and "berg" meaning a hill or mountain. In appearance an iceberg is a mountain of ice.

**ICHE DIEN.** This is German for "I serve." After the conquest of Wales by Edward the First, his son adopted the title of the Prince of Wales in order to conciliate the Welsh subject with the motto "*iche dien*," and since then the title and the motto have been adopted by every heir apparent to the throne of England.

**IDEA.** This word is derived from the Greek *idein* meaning to see and is akin to the Anglo-Saxon *wit*. In the Platonic sense the word "idea" was used in the same sense in which it is at present used in English philosophical writings, viz., mental representation of anything. Trench says "This word Idea is perhaps the worst case in the English language; in no other instance, perhaps, is a word so seldom used with any tolerable correctness; in none is the distance so immense between the sublimity of the word in its proper, and the triviality of it in its common and popular, use. How infinite the fall of the word, when this person has an 'idea' that the train has started, and the other had no 'idea' that the dinner would be so bad."

**IDENTITY.** It comes from the Latin *idem* the same. It is true that to be identical may sometimes mean to be the same as in the phrase "the identity of stolen goods," but we must not confuse the word "identity" with the "sameness." Invariably the word "identity" is applied to persons and the word "sameness" to things. But "identity" does not always mean sameness. When we say it is "the same" sound, it means "that the sound may be repeated," while "the identical" sound means "a sound" heard at some particular time but which cannot be repeated." When we say this is "the same person" we mean the one and the same person, but when we say there is the identity of the individual, we refer to two different individuals, similar to each other.

**IDEOGRAPH.** It comes from the Greek *idea*, meaning a semblance, and *grapho*, meaning I write, and "denotes a symbol which conveys an idea without expressing its name." The Chinese written language, is replete with numerous ideographs, for example the idea of an emperor is conveyed by the drawn characters meaning "ruler and one's self," for, the ancient sages taught that before a man could rule others, he must rule himself.

**IDIOSYNCRASY, IDIOT.** Both these words come from a Greek word meaning "own," hence idiosyncrasy is peculiarity of temperament, and idiot (which see) is originally a private person, and hence the transition is easy.

**IDIOT.** It comes from the Greek *idiotes* meaning private or one's own. The Greek word *idiotes* signified a private person as distinguished from one holding office, and that was the original meaning of the English word idiot. But as civilisation advanced and education became more prevalent, the word "idiot" came to mean one wanting in intellect and in this sense it is used in the present day. It is interesting to note that the Greeks have the expressions "a priest" or "an idiot" meaning a priest or a layman; a "poet" or "an idiot" meaning a "poet" or a "poor-writer."

**IDLE.** "Idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean." This simile is used by Coleridge (1772-1832) in *The Ancient Mariner*. The word "idle" here means motionless or inactive. Most probably, when used in that sense, the word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *idel* which meant useless, empty.

**IF.** "If you please." This phrase, when inserted in a sentence, is used peculiarly as much as to mean "Pray, do not suppose the contrary, because the opposite of the statement made is already taken for granted."

**IGNORAMUS.** An ancient law-term. Formerly the grand jury used to write on the back of indictments the word "ignoramus" meaning "not found," or in other words not to



be sent into court. But now they write "no true bill." The modern meaning of the word is one who is ignorant. The verb "ignore" is derived from *ignoramus*. "Ignoramus Jury." Formerly a grand jury was known by that name.

**"I GUESS IT'S ALL TURKEY"** (American). It indicates that all is equally good. Asked at a Thanksgiving dinner whether he preferred the white meat or dark of the standard dish, an old gentleman answered, "I don't care which; I guess it's all Turkey."

**I. H. S.** The initials I. H. S. signify "Jesus men's Saviour." Dr. Brewer suggests that those who like an English equivalent may adopt "Jesus, Heavenly Saviour."

**"I'LL EAT MY HAT."** Similar expressions are "I'll eat my head" or "I'll eat my boots." It is a mistake to think that hat in this phrase is a corruption of heart. When one uses this expression he conveys the idea of his doing something which seems impossible of achievement, and therefore, it sounds boastful on his part. The expression "I'll eat my head" occurs in Dicken's *Oliver Twist*. I remember having heard a cricketer once say, "I'll score a century or I'll eat my hat."

**"I'LL HAVE YOUR GAL."** This is Street slang, "gal" being used for "girl." When a street boy sees a fond couple together arm-in-arm he cries "I'll have your gal."

**ILLUSION.** It comes from the Latin "*illudo*," "il" meaning "upon," and "*ludo*," I play: hence illusion literally means playing upon, and it should not be confused with "delusion." The former refers to the deception of the senses, and the latter to the deception of the mind. In the first case the illuded person knows that he is being deceived, while in the second case the deluded person is unconscious of being deceived.

**ILLUSTRATE.** To illustrate is literally to throw light upon, from the pp. of *illustrare*, to throw light upon.

**ILLUSTRIOUS.** According to Skeat, this is a badly coined word in imitation of "industrious," either from French *illustre*, or Latin *illustris*, bright, renowned.

**IMAGINATIVE, IMAGINARY.** Speakers and writers often err in the use of these words. Imaginative is that which appertains to imagination, as, an imaginative work. Imaginary means fanciful, hence, visionary as opposed to real.

**IMBECILE.** Literally it means one who leans "on a stick" and we use it in the sense of one who is mentally weak. This word should not be confused with "idiocy," as the latter is absence of mental faculty, and the former is weakness of mental faculty.

**IMMACULATE.** It comes from the Latin *macula* meaning a spot, with the prefix "im" equivalent to "not," and hence

"immaculate" which literally means spotless or stainless. Formerly it was used in a divine sense, but now it is in everyday use, for instance, "He is immaculately dressed." It is worth noting that the word "maculate" meaning impure or defile is very seldom used. Shakespeare has it in *Love's Labour Lost* when he says :—

"Most maculate thoughts, mastery are masked under such colours."

**IMMENSE.** As an adjective it is used to indicate the superlative degree, as "immense charges." Tailors often notify that they are "immense on pants," and dressmakers that they are "immense on skirts," as if they made specialities of these articles. Americans use the word in reference to persons to signify excellent, or extremely good, as "he is an immense fellow."

**IMMORTAL DREAMER (THE).** A surname given to John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress* (1628-88).

**IMMUNITY, IMPUNITY.** They both come from the Latin, the former being derived from *in* meaning not, and *minus* means service, and the latter from *in*, or not, and *poena* meaning punishment. A person may commit crime with impunity, but he cannot expect to enjoy immunity from others.

**IMP.** This word comes from the Greek *emphuo* meaning to graft—literally to produce in—and formerly it meant an offspring, a descendant of a noble family. It is now used in the sense of a mischievous spirit or a devil, and it must be noted that the origin of this word is not responsible for this modern malignant significance of the word.

**IMPERTINENT.** Not pertinent *i.e.* not pertaining to the matter in hand.

**IMPOSS.** It is swank for impossible. That is quite imposs, old boy.

**IMPROVE, PROGRESS.** To improve is to better what is already good and has a limited sense. Progress is a generic term and is infinite. "To improve the shining hour." To be very busy. To be as busy as the bee. You are improving the shining hour means you are very busy.

**IN.** Politically "in" is said of a member of the party in office, as opposed to "out." In cricket the side batting is the side "in." On the turf, a horse is said "to be in it," when he is believed to have any prospective chance in the race. The common expressions are (a) "To be in with one" *i.e.* to be intimate with one; (b) "In for it" *i.e.* in difficulty or trouble; (c) "To be in it" (American) *i.e.* to take an interest, pecuniary, personal, or mental, in anything. Similarly "I'm on it" or "I am in it" means I have a part in the subject. *In nubibus* (Latin). In the clouds, and hence

not having an actual existence. The scheme is still *in nubibus*. *In flagrante delicto* (Latin). In the very act of guilt. He was caught *in flagrante delicto*. *In medias res* (Latin). Right into the middle of a subject. At last he rushed *in medias res* i.e. at last he came to the right subject after rigmaroling. *In memoriam* (Latin). To the memory of. Who has not heard of Tennyson's immortal "In Memoriam"? *In perpetuam* (Latin). In perpetuity. *In posse* (Latin). What may be considered probable, but has not yet real existence. *In re* (Latin). In the matter of. *In re* Johnson versus Thomson. *In rem* (Latin). In the matter of, again property or thing referred to. *In situ*. In its original place. Better get a copy of *Sakuntala* so that you can see the language *in situ*. *In esse*. This Latin term is applied to what is existing and is visible and is opposed to *in posse*. When a child is born, it is said to be *in esse*, but when it is in a state of being born, it is said to be *in posse*. "In possession of the House." A member, when called, is "in possession of the House," and when he is on his feet, no one else must interrupt him in his speech. If any interruption is allowed, it is, as a rule, through the courtesy of the Speaker, "In the neighbourhood of." In America this phrase is commonly used to mean about or near, in cases where there is no connection with locality, for example, an American will say "The loss is computed at something in the neighbourhood of forty thousand dollars." "In a crack." The expression means "done very quickly" and the idea is taken from the instantaneous crack of a whip. "In the nick of time." "Nick" is modified from "noek" which is the older form of "notch." It was an old custom to reckon both time and money by notches on a stick and hence the phrase came to signify "at the critical moment." "In his good books." Shakespeare says "The gentleman is not in your books" in *Much Ado About Nothing* meaning not in favour with you, and this phrase was amplified by the addition of the epithet "good." "In our midst." This phrase is quite absurd, because "our midst" means "our middle" and has therefore, no sense in it. "In the midst of us" may be more safely used. The Biblical phrase "in the midst of" is quite correct. "Jesus was in the midst of a certain number of people" means Jesus was in the middle of a crowd. "In the street, on the street." It is more correct to say "my house is in the 8th street" than "my house is on the 8th street." "In the Seventh Heaven." In the highest conceivable state of bliss and delight. "In the arms of Morpheus." Asleep and dreaming, Morpheus in Greek legend was son of Hypnos, God of sleep and dreams. "In quad." Quad is a contraction of quadrangle. Boys at English schools say "they are in quad" when they are confined to their own quadrangles.

**INDEX.** The plural of this word is indices and not indexes.

**INDIANS.** When America was first discovered, it was supposed to be a portion of India, and hence the natives of America were called Indians. The effect of this error still survives in the term "American Indians."

**INDICT, INDITE.** Both come from the Latin *in* and *dico* meaning say. The former signifies to proffer a formal written charge of crime, and the second signifies "to write down."

**INDIGENOUS.** It literally means "born within," *indu*, within, and *gen*, as in *gen-i-tus*, born, and, hence, native.

**INDIGO.** It comes from the Latin *indicus*, meaning Indian and when it first appeared in England, this substance was called "indico."

**INFANTRY.** "This term was originally applied to a body of men collected by the Infante (heir-apparent) of Spain for the purpose of rescuing his father, from the Moors. The attempt being successful, the name was afterwards applied to foot-soldiers in general."—Sullivan.

**INFLUENCE.** Its literal meaning is "in-flowing," from the Latin *fluo* meaning "flow," of planetary power upon the fortunes of men.

**INFORMANT, INFORMER.** Both these come from the Latin *informans*, meaning to describe. The first, however, is used in a good sense meaning a person who gives a harmless piece of information, but the latter is always in a bad sense and a person who informs against another is looked upon as odious.

**INFRA DIG.** An abbreviation of *infra dignitatem* meaning against dignity. When a person says or does something that lowers him in the estimation of others, his behaviour is called *infra dig.*

**INGRAIN COLOURS.** In Latin *granum* means a seed, and the small insect *coccus* which produces the beautiful dye is also called *granum* in Latin because of its similarity to small seeds. The Latin word became *graine* in French, and *grain* in English. "Ingrain" is an abbreviation of the phrase "dyed in grain." "Ingrain colour" is a commercial term applied to fabrics which are dyed with "fast" scarlet colour and these colours are more expensive than "common colours."

**INJURY.** Although this word now signifies harm or damage or a physical hurt, it formerly meant injustice.

**INKSTAND.** "He leaves nothing in his inkstand." He writes at such elaborate length that he makes himself tedious. By so doing the writer leaves nothing to the intelligence of his readers. This is how Spaniards describe a writer who exhausts the patience of his readers.

**INKY.** This is used evasively, *e.g.* of a question which it is not

desirable to answer. Booksellers and printers use it as an evasive answer.

**INN.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon, *in*, inn meaning chamber. Originally this word was applied to a mansion like the French word *hôtel*, for instance Lincoln's Inn was at one time the mansion of the Earls of Lincoln, and Gray's Inn that of the Lords Gray. It is said that the aristocratic people who went to war in foreign countries used to open up their mansions to the temporary entertainment of travellers as inns, and the signs "Red Lion," "Blue Boar," "Bull's Mouth" &c. were given to these inns out of respect to the landed gentry who lived in the neighbourhood, and some of these signs are still to be seen outside the inns and public houses in England. "Inns of Court." The four voluntary corporate societies which have the exclusive right of calling to the Bar. They are Lincoln's Inn, Inner Temple, Middle Temple and Gray's Inn. In their respective inns the members dine together and barristers have their chambers. Each inn is governed by a board of benchers.

**INNINGS.** This term is taken from cricket, in which an innings signifies the batting of one member of a team or the whole team. The word innings also means a turn, spell, chance. "To have a good innings" is to be fortunate and "to have a long innings" figuratively means to live a long life.

**INOCULATE.** Originally it meant the insertion of the "eye" of a bud into the stock of another plant, being derived from the Latin *in*, meaning in, and *oculus* meaning an eye.

**INQUIRE, INVESTIGATE.** Inquire is a compound of *in*, and *quaero*, signifying to search after. Hence it merely means to ask, or to seek; and conveys the idea of superficiality. The word investigation is derived from the Latin *vestigium*, a track; hence to investigate is to search by following a certain line of action and it denotes thoroughness.

**INSECT.** This comes from the Latin *in* meaning in, and *seco* to cut. The head and throat of insects are separated from the abdomen by a deep incision or cut, and there is in the word "insect" an allusion to this.

**INSIDER.** (a) One who is in some society or organisation, as opposed to outsider and (b) one who is in the secret i.e. one in the know. (See "In the know.")

**INSINUATE.** This word takes its significance from the sinuous motion of a snake. Formerly "insinuation" was used in a good sense to denote friendly interposition.

**INSPIRED.** Slangily used for "drunk."

**INSULT.** This comes from the Latin *in* meaning upon, and *salto* meaning to leap, and originally it meant to trample upon and also to leap or land upon an enemy's coast. An

enemy is said to "insult" a coast when he suddenly appears upon it, and debarks with purpose to attack.—Stocqueler.

**INSURANCE, ASSURANCE.** These words have really the same meaning, but assurance is applied to risks depending upon human life, and "insurance" to risks connected with property. It was in 1666 after the great fire that the insuring against fire commenced.

**INTENTION, DESIGN.** Originally "intention" means directing the mind. A design is a studied intention.

**INTER ALIA.** This is a Latin phrase meaning "among other things." In his speech, the speaker referred, *inter alia*, to the necessity of laying down a new rule.

**INTERDINE.** There is no such word in the English language nor can such a word be formed on the same principle as intermarry, interview &c., as a dinner between two castes could not be spoken of.

**INTEREST, INTERESTS.** The distinction between the two lies in this that "interest" is always used in the singular in the sense of "appreciative regard," and always in the plural in the sense of personal gain or loss. In the first case it is subjective and always singular; in the latter it is objective and always plural. He takes a keen interest in the industrial development of India, his interests are diagonally opposed to those of mine.

**INTERFERE.** It comes from the old French *intrefeſir*, to strike between. In the sixteenth century this word was used of a horse knocking its legs together in trotting. Colgrave says, "to interfere as a horse."

**INTERFERE, INTERMEDDLE.** To interfere is to set oneself between; to intermeddle is to meddle or mix among. Interfering may be an authorised or unauthorised act, whereas intermeddling is always unauthorised. The former may be justifiable or not, but the other is always unjustifiable, because to intermeddle is to interfere with things that do not concern oneself. Both these terms are used in reference to what concerns only one individual. Interfere should not be confused with intercede or intercept. To intercede is literally to go between, hence, to mediate. When two persons quarrel, a third person intercedes with a view to bring about a reconciliation. To intercept is literally to catch between, hence to intercept the journey or passage of, as, of a messenger or a letter.

**INTO.** "I will be into him." I will fight him or I will pitch into him. (See "Pitch into.")

**INTREPID.** This comes from the Latin *intrepidus* meaning without trembling, and hence, brave or fearless.

**INTRINSIC.** It literally means inborn. Formerly it was used

in the sense of intimate, as in the following phrase "He falls into intrinsical society with Sir John Graham."

**INVENT, DISCOVER.** The original meaning of invent is to come upon, while to discover is to take off the cover. Marconi invented wireless telegraphy, and Columbus discovered America. When the materials are discovered, an invention follows, that is, a thing is discovered, which is already in existence, and a thing is invented which is quite new and was not known to be in existence.

**INVITATIONS TO DRINK.** The following are some of the curious American modes of giving and answering invitations to drink:—Invitations—Nominate your pizen, Will you irrigate, Wet your whistle, Let us stimulate, Let's drive another nail, Will you try a smile, Suck some corn-juice, &c.; responses—'Count me in, I subscribe, I'm with you, You do me proud, Don't care if I do, Anything to oblige, Accepted unconditionally, &c.

**INVOLVE, IMPLICATE.** These words should be distinguished from each other. Involve usually suggests the idea of freedom from taking part in any wrong-doing or crime, whereas implicate does convey the idea of crime.

**I.O.U.** What is called an I.O.U. requires no stamp. It is a mere acknowledgment of a debt, and cannot be sued upon as a bill. If, however, the day on which payment is promised is specified, it becomes a bill and must be stamped. It is an abbreviation of I owe you.

**IPSO FACTO.** In the fact itself. A highwayman is an outlaw *ipso facto*, since he does not acknowledge the laws of the country.

**IRISH, DUTCH.** Americans use these words to signify anger, or arousing temper, such as "he has his Irish or Dutch up." "Irish Bull." A story contradicted by the narrator to the amusement of others, himself being unconscious of it. Some think that "Bull" in this phrase means "reckless exaggeration," being derived from the old French word *boule*, a fraud.

**IRK.** It is derived from the Icelandic *yrk* meaning work. This word is rather expressive and is always used impersonally to signify disgust as "it irks me, I am sick of it."

**IRONCLADS.** This term was first applied to wooden ships of war strengthened by a covering of iron armour-plates, and now it is loosely employed for all armoured ships. Once the term "ironclad" was applied to everything well-defended, as "an ironclad oath." A girl severely virtuous was termed "an ironclad." "Iron woman of America." This name was given to Mrs. Harriet White Fisher Andrew who during her husband's illness took charge of the foundry and built the business which now supplies anvils and vices to every part of the United States.

**IRONS.** Figuratively used for "fetters." "Irony of Fate." The curious providence which brings about quite the reverse of what was expected. Joseph Chamberlain first served under Gladstone's banner, and then by the irony of fate he became the leader of the Unionist Party.

**IRRIGATE (TO).** An American expression for "to drink, to take liquor or refreshment." "Irrigate your canal" is the American way of inviting one to take a drink and is becoming common in England. It is a matter of regret that so many ugly slang expressions are making their way in England.

**I SAY.** This expression is colloquially used in calling a person's attention to what you are going to say, as "I say, I am afraid we shall have to drop the idea of going to Brighton."

**I SHOULD SMILE.** This is of American origin, a strong accent being laid on "should." It generally signifies an intimation of surprise, or mild contempt, and is mostly used by women.

**I SHOULD THINK SO.** Here "think" is emphasised, and this expression denotes the speaker's acquiescence in what has been said. It should not be confused with the expression "Well, I should think," where a strong accent is laid on "should." In the latter phrase, something is left incomplete which is equivalent to "that he ought to be ashamed or that he ought to know better."

**IS THERE NO BALM IN GILEAD.** This means "Is there no remedy or consolation even in religion?" This phrase which is used nowadays was in use at so early a time as 600 B.C., and it occurs in Genesis in the story of Joseph being sold to the Ishmaelites. Gilead is noted for its fragrant tree, and balm is the gum of that tree.

**IT IS, THERE IS.** "It" is a pronoun and is, therefore, used to represent an object. When speaking of a book lying on a table we say "it is there," we use the pronoun it to represent the object viz. the book. "There" is an adverb and is merely used to introduce a subject without representing any object. It really does not signify anything and is used as a grammatical form, for instance "There is a fellow of that name whom I know." The word "there" does not represent any object, but is merely used to introduce the subject in such a manner as to meet the exigencies of grammar.

**IT IS ON THE ANVIL.** Under deliberation. The reference is to a smithy.

**IT TAKES THE GLOSS OFF.** It means "it materially detracts from its value."

**ITCHING.** "An itching palm." A covetous disposition, showing love of money. According to the superstition, if the



palm of one's right hand itches, one is to receive money. "To have itching ears." To long for some news. According to the superstition, if one's ears itch, he is to receive news. "Itching of the eye." It betokens grief, according to the old superstition. Shakespeare uses it in *Othello*. "Itching of the nose." It indicates that one is going to receive a stranger. "Itching of the thumb." It betokens the approach of evil, and in *Macbeth* Shakespeare uses it. •

**ITEM.** (a) Properly an "item" is a separate article or particular, and is commonly used for enumerating particulars, (b) hint, a piece of news, (c) in gambling, an "item" is a signal from a confederate, (d) a paragraph of news (as used by American journalists), and (e) thieves use the word for a warning.

**IVORIES.** Slang for the keys of a piano, hence the phrase "to tickle the ivories" slangily expresses one's ability to play the piano. This word is also figuratively used for teeth which in their natural state are white. "To show one's ivories." To display one's teeth. "To wash one's ivories." To rinse the mouth; figuratively to drink.

## J.

**JABBER.** Although to "jabber" properly means to talk indistinctly, it is vulgarly used in England nowadays with the meaning of "to chatter or talk." In Swift's time it was a cant word. An English friend of mine often dropped in to see me during my stay in England "to have a jabber" as he used to say.

**JACK.** "To jack up." To throw up, probably a corruption of "chuck." When a player at whist finds his partner's hand as shocking as his own, and tells him to lay down his cards, he says "Jack it up," in disgust. "Jack ketch." Common name for the hangmen of England. Some think this to be a corruption of Jasequett, who was Lord of the Manor of Tyburn. It is also said to be derived from a man named Jack Ketch, who officiated in the reign of Charles the Second. To Ketch also signifies to hang. "A jack-at-a-pinch." A person unexpectedly called upon to perform a duty. This phrase is generally applied to a clergyman who has no fixed position, and who is unexpectedly required to officiate at a wedding or a funeral in the place of the regular minister. "A jack-in-office." A person who is pert and rude on the strength of his official position. "Jack sprat." A boy or a man of diminutive stature is so called. "Before you could say Jack Robinson." In an instant. I shall come back before you could say Jack Robinson. It is also used in an abbreviated form, "before you could say J. R." "Remember

poor Jack." When you go to a sea-side place such as Brighton, "remember poor Jack" *i.e.* don't forget to throw a copper to the boy who paddles about the pier, and plays all sorts of tricks for a little mite.

**JAM.** "Real jam." One of the synonyms for a turf certainly, though not so much in vogue now. In common parlance the phrase is used to express excellence, good luck, happiness.  
• A similar expression is "true marmalade."

**JANUARY.** So named by the Romans from Janus, who presided over the beginning of everything.

**JANUS.** The God who opened the year and the seasons, and hence the first month of the year is called January. (See January.)

**JAPANNING.** The art of coating metal or wood with coloured varnish by the aid of heat is so called. Articles so coated are more durable than those that are painted ordinarily. "To japan" is slangily used in the sense of to black or clean one's boots; and Charles Dickens uses it in *Oliver Twist*. As a university term, "to japan" means to ordain.

**JAR.** The vulgar expression "it jars me" cannot be justified. "To jar" is to cause to shake or to jolt, and not to disconcert or to ruffle. It would be more correct to say "it is jarring upon my ears," indicating thereby as if a shock was given to the system.

**JAW.** It is a low term for "speak" or "talk," and as verb it means both "to talk" and "to scold." "Hold your jaw" means shut up, don't speak any more (see "Shut up"), and "what are you jawing about" means what are you making a noise about by talking so much! Jaw-breakers or jaw-twisters are hard or many-syllabled words difficult to pronounce.

**JEALOUS.** This word in its original sense means zealous. "The Lord, our God, is a jealous God."

**JEER, JEST.** As verbs, they both are followed by the preposition "at." To jeer is to scoff derisively, whereas to jest is to speak or act in trifling manner. One jeers at a person, and jests at sacred things.

**JEHOVAH.** The Jews hold this word in so much reverence that even at prayers instead of pronouncing this word they substitute for it the word Adonai or Lord.

**JEHU.** This is applied to a cabman or a coach-driver from the furious driving of Jehu, the son of Minshi (2 *Kings* ix. 20).

**JEJUNE.** It comes from the Latin *jejunos* meaning dry or spiritless. Hence a jejune narrative is one which is dry and uninteresting. This word is most frequently used by literary critics, and is synonymous with "namby-pamby."

**JEOPARDY.** This word is of dignified origin. Old French *jeu parti* literally means a divided game, that is, a game in

which chances are equal. Hence "jeopardy" signifies hazard or risk. The verb "to jeopardise" is formed from the noun jeopardy. A lawyer jeopardises himself (or his position or his reputation) by making statements at random.

**JERK.** In America this word is used in various forms to express rapid action, for instance, to jerk a poem, article or book is to write it hurriedly. Hence "in a jerk" means instantly.

**JERRY.** This word is commonly used by the lower classes of the great cities of England in many phrases, and it seems to be a contemptuous abbreviation of Jeremiah, in the same sense as "jeremiad," a lament. "Jerry-builder." A speculative builder who uses materials of the cheapest kind without any care for their durability. "The jerry-built Insurance Act was passed as a sound structure simply in order that, at Mr. Redmond's orders, the Government might get on with its task of promoting civil war."—*The Evening News*, 1914. Jerry-go-nimble. Diarrhoea. Jerry-shop. An unlicensed public house with a back door entrance.

**JESSIE.** "To give a man Jessie." To beat him soundly. The origin of this term is uncertain.

**JETTY.** It comes from the old French *jettee*, the past participle of *jetter*, to throw. A jetty is that part of a building which juts out over the ground plan, and it has nothing to do with "jet," as in the expression "jet black." "Jet" takes its name from the river Ganges, in Asia Minor, from the banks of which it was first obtained by the Ancients. The pieces of jet obtained from there were originally called *gagates*, afterwards corrupted into *gagot*, and finally to "jet." It is sometimes termed, black amber.

**JEWEL.** It is derived from the Italian *giola*, joy; whence *gioello*, a jewel, a thing that gives pleasure.

**JEWELS, JEWELRY.** The stock in a jeweller's shop made up collectively by jewels is called jewelry, and the gems or precious stones worn by a person are called jewels.

**JIB.** In nautical language the jib is the foremost sail of a ship which in shape and position corresponds to the most prominent feature on the human face, viz., the nose, and a vessel is known by the cut of the jib sail. Hence, the phrase "to know a man by the cut of a jib" is to know him by his peculiar or characteristic appearance, "jib" being figuratively used for the face or a person's expression. At the Dublin University, "a jib" is a first-year man. On the turf "a jib" is a horse that moves restively sideways or backwards, the allusion being to the pulling against the bit, as a horse does. Shakespeare uses it in the sense of a worn-out horse.

**JIFFY.** Very short time. "In a jiffy" means very soon. I shall be back in a jiffy. This expression is very common in

England. Similar expressions are "In a tick," "In a kick," "In a mo'," &c.

**JIGGER.** "I am jiggered" is a form of mild swearing. Another form of this swearing is "I am sniggered," and both these expressions are often followed by "If you will." Equivalents are "I am blown," "I am damned," "I am hanged," "I am bothered," "I am cursed," and sometimes ironically "I am blessed!" "By Jingo" is also a mild form of oath, and is a corruption of "St. Gingoulph."

**JIMMY.** This word has three significations, (a) exactly fit, suitable (America), (b) a contrivance, concealed confederate, "a fake" (show parlance), and (c) nonsense, (Cambridge University), in which case the expression is "all Jimmy." Besant uses this word in his works.

**JINGOISM.** Overabundant military patriotism which is always ready to declare for war. Foreign policy of the Conservative Party in England in respect to foreign affairs is also termed jingoism.

**JOB.** The use of this word generally carries with it the sense of an unfair arrangement, as is shown by its original signification which was "an arranged robbery." Furthermore, the word implies precariousness and temporariness, although it is now commonly used for a situation that may be permanent. "Job" really signifies a short piece of work, and "by the job" means piece-work, as opposed to time-work. Amongst undertakers, "to do a job" is to conduct one's funeral, and here also the sense of temporary work is retained. A horse is said "to be on the job," when the supposed intentions of the jockey are not honest, and politically "a job" is a Government Office or contract, secured by secret influence or nepotism (which see). "A job lot" also called "a sporting lot" means any miscellaneous goods either purchased at a cheap rate or to be sold a bargain. Here also the sense of unfair arrangement is present, viz., the attempt at concealing the fact of the goods being stolen or dishonestly obtained. From "job" we have "jobbery" meaning corruption where the original sense of the word is also retained. A Job's comforter. A person who calls on another to give him some comfort, and instead annoys him by reproaching him is called "a Job's comforter." The three friends of Job went to him in his trouble as his comforters, but spent all their time there in reproaching him, and hence the comforter. If A has lost all his money, and if B calling upon him starts preaching to him instead of feeling sorry for A, A turns round and says "You are a Job's comforter." Job's news. News of some misfortune. Job's post. A bringer of bad news. To do the job for a man. To kill him. His continuous and reckless debauchery at last did the job for him.

**JOE MILLER.** This term denotes a stale jest. Joe Miller was a famous comic actor, and was well known for his witty bits, and hence the term.

**JOG.** To jog another's memory. To remind him of a promise which he has apparently forgotten. To jog on. To proceed in a lazy manner, "Thus they jog on, still tricking, never thriving."—*Dryden*.

**JOHN BULL.** Common name for an Englishman. Bull conveys the idea of a blatant, swaggering sort of fellow. To wait for John Long, the carrier. To wait a long time.

**JOIN.** "To join issue." Although used in the sense of "to agree," it signifies "to take opposite sides of case." "To take issue" means to deny.

**JOKIST.** A man fond of playing practical jokes.

**JOLLIER.** This slang term designates a person who treats another in a jolly and pleasant manner with a view to get a favour out of him. Strictly speaking, a jollier is one who jokes at another's expense.

**JOLLY.** This word is slangily used as an expletive signifying exceedingly, as, he was jolly well tired. As an adjective it means fine, excellent. It also means slightly drunk. Jolly-boys are a group of small drinking vessels, and a jolly-dog is a boon companion.

**JONAH MAN (A).** (Biblical). Anyone on board ship who is regarded as the cause of ill-luck during the voyage is so called. Jonah was commanded by God to Nineveh to preach repentance, but instead of going there, he fled to Tarshish. He was overtaken by a storm and thrown overboard by the sailors who regarded him as the cause of the tempest.

**JOSTLE, JUSTLE.** They both mean "to push against," the former being more commonly used.

**JOT.** It comes from *iota*, the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet, and it means a small particle. Probably the word came into use when the letters "i" and "j" were confounded with each other.

**JOURNEYMAN.** The word journey comes from the French *journée*, meaning a day's work and hence a journeyman is one who works for daily wages. The word "journal" strictly means a daily paper, as it comes from the French *journal* meaning a day, but it has become customary to call weekly papers journals.

**JOVIAL.** A person born under the planet "Jupiter" is called a "jovial" person meaning merry or gay, because in astrology Jupiter is considered to be the happiest of the planets.

**JUBILEE.** Among the Jews, a jubilee used to be a festival which they celebrated every fiftieth year in commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt. In the Romish Church it is a kind of solemn ceremony to be observed every hun-

dredth year, and this was first enjoined by Pope Boniface. Pope Sixtus the Fourth afterwards ordered it to be observed every twenty-fifth year. At Winchester College "jubilee" is employed to signify a pleasant time, and Dryden uses it in that sense in these words :--The town was all in a jubilee of feasts."

**JUG (A).** A deep vessel for holding liquors with handle and often with spout, whence, jugful. Formerly drinking vessels were called by such christian names as Jacks, Jugs and Jills; (b) a term of contempt applied to a woman, Jug and judge being pet female names at one time; (c) a prison, in which case it is a contraction of stone-jug, and hence, to jug a person is to imprison him; (d) a simpleton is called a jug, probably an abbreviation of juggins (which see); and (e) a bank, hence, jug-breaking means bank-burglary.

**JUGGINS.** A turf term for a simpleton. A similar expression is mug (which see).

**JULY.** It is believed to have been so named after Julius Cæsar, who was born in July.

**JUMBLE.** Richardson says "perhaps from the French *combler* (Lat. *cumulare*), to heap up, to throw up in a heap or mass; or rather a diminutive of jump. Chaucer writes jombre and Sir T. More jumper; the one equivalent to jumble, the other to jump &c." I suspect the origin of the word is to be found in the Italian *giumella*, what can be grasped in two hands, the natural course adopted for the hasty and untidy removal of a number of objects together.—Reverend W. L. Blackley, *Word Gossip*.

**JUMP AT, JUMP TO.** "To jump at an offer" is to accept it immediately and eagerly. It should always be jumped at and not jumped to in this sense. One can jump to the floor from a chair.

**JUNCTURE.** A union, a critical moment. The sense "critical moment" is from the "union" of planets, and hence, it is astrological.

**JUNE.** By some etymologists the name is supposed to be derived from Junius, the Roman Emperor. By others it is thought that it comes from Juno, a Roman divinity worshipped as the Queen of Heaven.

**JUNO.** Queen of the Gods and Goddesses. She was the protectress of married women.

**JUPITER.** Son of Saturn and Cybele. Supreme deity in Greek and Roman mythology.

**JURISPRUDENCE.** It is the science or philosophy of law. In its literal sense it means merely knowledge of the law and it is in this sense that the term was used in the Roman law. In its popular sense it is often used as synonymous with law, but it differs from law in as much as it deals with the laws,

customs, and rights of man in a community which are necessary for the due administration of justice, or in other words, it is the system embracing the principles on which positive law is founded. Justinian defines it as the science of right and wrong. There are two branches of jurisprudence, viz., general and particular. General jurisprudence deals with and investigates the principles of positive law irrespective of locality, and particular jurisprudence confines itself to the particular laws of any country. This science has been cultivated more by students of philosophy than by lawyers, and Austin was the first man to throw light upon the subject by a series of lectures. Works by Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, and Sir Henry Maine have done a great deal towards the exposition and advancement of this science.

**JURY.** It comes from the French *jurêr* to swear, and every man on the jury has to be sworn before he takes his seat.

**JUST.** As an adverb this word is peculiarly used in Herefordshire. For instance, instead of "I have but just returned," they say "I returned but just." "Just the thing." It means the very thing, *i.e.* exactly the thing that was required, or the thing which meets one's requirements. The house which I am about to purchase is just the thing I want. "Just so." The expression "just so" is equivalent to "exactly so," or "yes indeed." "Quite so" is now a mere substitute for "yes," yet at one time "quite" signified "entirely," and had therefore an emphatic significance.

**JUSTICE.** "Justice is blind." Justice is always represented blindfolded so that she may not see any bribes offered to her. The old Egyptians use to conduct court trials in darkened chambers so that no prisoner, pleader or witness could be seen, and no partiality could be shown to any of them.

**JUVENILE OFFENDER.** A person under the age of sixteen convicted and sentenced to be imprisoned is called a juvenile offender in England, and the magistrate may also at his discretion sentence such an offender to be sent to a reformatory school for not less than two or more than five years. Vagrant children who have not yet committed a crime may also be sent to an industrial school.

## K.

**K. D.** Abbreviation of the words keep dark *i.e.* "don't say anything about it."

**K. LEGS (PRINTERS).** Contemptuously applied to a person with "knocked-knees" on account of the legs being apart as in the lower portions of K.

**KAFFIR (ARABIC).** An infidel.

**KAISER.** This title of the German emperor is synonymous with "Caesar," and "Caesar," Czar, Kaiser and Shah are all forms of the Babylonian Shar, meaning King.

**KALEIDOSCOPE.** "This word is composed of the Greek *Kalos*, beautiful, *eidōs*, appearance, and *Skopeō*, I behold. It is an instrument which, by means of reflection from two mirrors fixed at a suitable angle, presents an endless variety of beautiful forms of perfect symmetry."

**KALI.** A Hindu Goddess, after whom Calcutta is named. *Kali-Kutta*, i.e. Kali's village.

**KANGAROO CLOSURE (POLITICAL TERM).** This closure is applied to a bill, the progress of which has been arrested through Parliament by endless amendments. The Chairman picks out the most important amendments for discussion, the remainder being "jumped" or passed over, and hence the expression.

**KATCHA.** (Anglo-Indian.) Bad, raw, unripe. Properly it is applied to a house built of mud, and Anglo-Indians use it in that sense. They also call an Official not permanent in his post "A katcha Official." But the word is also applied to an unripe fruit, for instance, a katcha apple means an unripe apple.

**KATE.** A smart woman or girl. In Dutch slang it means a bad woman.

**KEEL.** "Keel-hauling." Taking one to task with corporal punishment. Offenders on board a ship used to be thrown overboard with a rope attached and then hauled up from under the ship's keel, and hence the expression. "To keel over." When a person comes to distress in an undertaking, he is said to keel over, just as a vessel in distress "keel up." This phrase is commonly used in America. Similar expressions are "to go up the spout," "to be dead broke," "to be stumped," &c.

**KEEN.** This word is used in the sense of "sharp" as in the phrases "keen edge of a razor" "keen man of business." The Anglo-Saxon word *ceac* meant "bold," and the Icelandic *kaenn* meant wise, and the Anglo-Saxon word is connected with *can*, meaning able. Therefore a keen man is not only sharp, but bold, wise and able. "Keen on." To be keen on a girl is to be in love with her, and to keen on a thing is to have a great liking for it.

**KEEP.** A native would prefer "I remained standing" to "I kept standing" although the latter form is often used. The verb "keep" is more correctly used in connection with something that is rapidly repeated, as "I kept moving" or "I kept contradicting him." One cannot correctly say "I kept sitting or sleeping." In the same manner it is far better to say "I am going to wear a beard" than "I am going to



keep a beard." The phrase "I kept up correspondence" is quite correct, because in this case something is implied which occurred repeatedly. "Keeping house." In law this term means keeping within doors to avoid one's creditors, and this in itself constitutes an act of bankruptcy. "To keep up appearances." A person who has undergone some misfortune and who still refrains from showing it outwardly, by continuing to live as he had lived before, is said to keep up appearances. "To keep company." Two men can keep company for social purposes, and a man keeps company with a woman whom he courts. A man who keeps company with a woman is said to be walking out with her. "To keep one's head above water." Just as a swimmer keeps his head above water as a safeguard against drowning, one must avoid getting into any trouble or debts. Hence the phrase means to be able to pay one's way. "To keep a good table." To keep the table always well provided with excellent food and drinks both for one's self and for one's guests. "To keep house, to keep the house." To keep house is to manage the household, usually the business of a woman who is employed as housekeeper. To keep the house is to remain in the house or indoors. An ill person or a debtor keeps the house. "To keep a hotel" (American). A phrase denoting administrative capacity. The common expression is "He can't keep a hotel." "Keep that dry." Keep that secret. "Keep your eyes skinned." Keep your eyes open or be watchful. Similar expression is "Keep your weather-eye lifting." "Keep your pecker up." Don't lose heart. Pecker means mouth. "To keep a pig" (Oxford). When a University man has rooms containing two bed chambers, and is compelled to give one of these to a fresh man in the event of the College being full, he is said to keep a pig. The freshman is his pig. Hence it means to have a lodger.

**KENDAL GREEN.** In speaking of three misbegotten knaves in Kendal Green, Falstaff refers to the green cloth made in Kendal, in Westmoreland, for which this town was long famous.

**KENTISH FIRE.** This expression means rapturous applause consisting of cheers or clapping hands. In 1834 Lord Winchelsea in proposing the health of the Earl of Roden said "Let it be given with the Kentish fire." In proposing another toast, he asked whether he could bring his "Kentish artillery" into action again. His chief estates lay in the County of Kent. In his *Encyclopædia*, Chambers says that this expression arose from the prolonged cheers given in Kent in 1828 to those orators who denounced Popery.

**KETTLE.** "Pretty kettle of fish." This colloquial phrase is applied to a confused state of affairs, as I am in a pretty kettle of fish, and I hardly know what to do, *i.e.*, I am in a

muddle and don't know what to do. "Kettledrum." In India this term was originally employed to denote a large social party of military men, where drumheads served for tables. In England, however, this term signifies an afternoon tea-party, the word "drum" conveying the idea of a ball-room on account of the noise, and subsequently coming to mean a drawing-room.

**KEW.** Week. It is an example of back slang.

**KIBOSH.** Slang for "humbug." "To put the kibosh on" is slang for "to put an end to."

**KICK.** This word is sometimes slangily used for "protest." But careful writers never use it in that sense, although George Eliot has used it in that sense in *Silas Marner*. "To kick up a row." This is a very common expression in England nowadays, meaning to cause a disturbance. "To have the kick." (Football.) To have luck. "In a kick." it means "In a moment." Similar expressions are "In a jiffy," "In a tick," "In a crack," &c. "Kicker." A horse given to kicking is so called.

**KICKSHAWS.** Odds and ends. This is a corruption of the French *quelque chose*, meaning something.

**KID.** In common parlance "a kid" means "a child." Originally the term "kid" was employed to signify a swell or a masher. From "kid" we have "kiddy" a boy, and "kidlet" a boy or girl, and the adjective "kiddish" meaning childish, as he is very kiddish. Synonyms are "brat," "imp," "youngster." As verb it means to pretend, to wheedle, to impose in any way with a view to fool another. A girl is said to be kidding a fellow when she is pretending to be in love with him, whereas she is only fooling him. "To kid one" is to incite one to perpetrate an act. "To kid oneself" is to be conceited, just as a girl kids herself on her costume, or a man kids himself on his moustaches. It is worthy of note that "kidnapping" which means stealing of children comes from "kid" a child, and "nap" to steal. A "kids-man" is one who boards and lodges boys for the purpose of training them into the practice of stealing. "Hard kid" means hard lines or bad luck, and "no kid" is used in the sense of no jokes, seriously.

**KIDNEY.** It means kind, disposition, fashion, hence, the expressions "two of a kidney" and "two of a different kidney" signify two of a sort of two of a mind, and two of different habits or turn of mind.

**KILKENNY CATS.** This is applied to people who fight with extreme violence like cats. There was the fable of the Kilkenny cats which fought so long that in the end only their tails were left.

**KILLING OFF.** This expression is sometimes used in the sense of making a thing die out, as "mechanical appliances

are killing off primitive industries." The point to be observed is that the phrase is "kill off" not "kill out," but the thing that is "killed off" is said to "die out," and not "die off."

**KING.** It is a contraction of the Anglo-Saxon *cynig*, son of a nation or people. In Anglo-Saxon times the King was elected by the *Witenagemot* (council of wise men), and hence he was the choice of the nation. It comes from the same source as "kin" does and signifies the same. "King's English." The King's English or the Queen's English, as the case may be, means perfect English. Shakespeare in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* says "here will be an old abusing of . . . the King's English." "King's Evil." The old name for scrofula was the "King's Evil" and the custom was to touch the person of the King by way of cure. Samuel Johnson was "touched" by Queen Anne in 1712, and Prince Charles Edward "touched" a child at Holyrood in 1745. "To turn King's evidence." The law takes the view that by granting pardon to a criminal it encourages him to bring to justice his confederates, and the person who gives evidence against his co-prisoners and thus becomes a witness for the State is said "to turn King's evidence" in return for which service he receives a pardon.

**KINGDOM.** *Dom* in the word kingdom is the Anglo-Saxon *dom* which represents "statute, jurisdiction."

**KISS.** "Kissing goes by favour." It literally means kissing goes by looks, women, as a rule, being partial to good looks. This proverb is generally misunderstood. In the game of billiards, two balls in close contact are said "to kiss." "Kisser" it means the mouth and "kissers" means the lips.

**KIT.** A person's luggage. It is sometimes used in the sense of the entire lot, for instance, "the whole kit" of them means the whole lot of them.

**KIT-CAT CLUB.** It was a club of Whig politicians founded under James the Second, who was a member of this club. It took its name from the name of the pastrycook Christopher Catt, at whose shop the club used to meet.

**KITH AND KIN.** These two words have practically no difference of meaning, although a slight distinction can be drawn from their origins. "Kith" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *cunnan* meaning to know, and "kin" is the Anglo-Saxon *cynn* meaning a race, an off-spring, and *cynn* is derived from *gan*, to beget.

**KNAPSACK.** The meaning of this word is literally a provision-bag, coming as it does from the Danish *knappen*, to eat, and *zak*, a bag. In its modern application it is used for a soldier's kit or a tourist's clothes.

**KNAVE.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *cnafa*, meaning a boy, a servant, and originally it was used in that sense. It came to mean "servant" because servants were addressed

as boys by the Greeks. As some sort of disparagement is attached to the word, it finally developed the sense of moral worthlessness. Shakespeare uses it in its original sense.

**KNEEL.** This word comes from knee, and therefore to kneel means to rest upon the knee.

**KNELL.** This word is derived both from Welsh and Saxon, and these come from *nola* which is low Latin signifying a bell.

- The Bishop of Nola was the first to use church-bells.

**KNIFE.** Figuratively used for surgery. The expression "to knife a person" in the sense of to stab a person is very commonly used in England, and I have often read it in books of fiction. But the phrase is un-English.

**KNIGHT.** This word is commonly added as a prefix to a man's calling ironically. • Thus "knight of the razor," a barber; "knight of the tumbler," a tailor; and "knight of the whip," a coachman.

**KNOBSTICK.** A workman who undertakes to do secret work • at home when his fellow workers are on strike and does that work at lower wages than the regulation price, is called a knobstick.

**KNOCK.** In cricket the side that goes in to bat first is said to have the first "knock," and a batsman who runs up a big score quickly is said to have "knocked up" so many runs. In pugilism "to be knocked out of time" is to be so thoroughly beaten as to be unable to answer the call of time, that is, to be unable to rise and renew the contest after the counting time is over. "Knocker out" is a redoubtable prize fighter. On the turf a horse is said to be "knocked out" in the betting, when he is so persistently laid against that from a short price he goes back to long odds, that is, he starts at a long price like an outsider. • In workmen's slang "to knock off" is to quit work. When a little is deducted from a price of a thing, so much is "knocked off." To "knock in," at the Oxford University, means to return to one's College after the gate is closed. In common parlance to be "knocked up" is to be tired, jaded, used up (which see). "Up to the knocker" means (a) showily dressed to the height of fashion and (b) proficient or equal to the task. In the former sense of the word, a similar expression for conveying the same idea is "dressing to death." "A knock-about suit" is a suit for ordinary wear, and a "knock-about man" is a Jack of all trades, and, hence, a handy man. In theatrical parlance, "knock about" is an actor of noisy and violent pantomime. "That knocks me" for that "confounds me" is an expression one often hears in London streets in low classes. "Knock into a cocked hat" is in more common use in America than in England. When a silk round hat has been smashed, it is said to have been knocked into the shape of three-cornered or cocked hat, and figuratively it means completely beaten,

sinashed, as if out of shape. "To knock down a cheque" (Australian). A system known as knocking down one's cheque prevails all over the unsettled parts of Australia. This is to say, a man with a cheque, or a sum of money in his possession, hands it over to the publican, and calls for drinks for himself and his friends, until the publican tells him he has drunk out his cheque. Of course he never gets a tithe of his money's worth in any shape or way—indeed the kindest thing a publican can possibly do is to refuse him any more liquor at a very early stage of the proceedings, for cheques for enormous amounts are frequently "knocked down" in this way. A quarter of the worth of them, if honestly drunk out in Bush liquor, would inevitably kill a whole regiment.—*Finch Hatton*. "To knock" is slangily used for "to find fault with continually." Another slang used in the same sense is "to hammer," but one could do better without either.

**KNOW, OR KNOWING.** The word "know" in the sense of dishonesty or shrewdness enters into several slang phrases such as "a knowing codger," "a knowing blade," "I know a truth worth two of that" &c. The last phrase which occurs in Shakespeare's *King Henry IV.*, part I, expresses that I am not to be taken in by such a shallow device. The expression "he knows a thing or two" is a slang expression commonly used and means that he is a cunning fellow. "To know your book." To be correctly informed. Similar expressions are "to know the time of day," "to know the ropes," "to know one's way about." "To be in the know," (turf). To have a knowledge of the secrets of some particular stable. Now used in a general sense. Marie Corelli often uses this expression in her novels in a general sense. "To know where my shoe pinches." In the life of Aemilius Paulus, Plutarch tells the story of a Roman who had been divorced from his wife, and was therefore blamed by his friends, who asked "Was she not chaste? Was she not fair?" In reply he held up his shoe, and asked them whether it was not shapely and well made? "And yet," he added, "no one but myself can tell where it pinches me." Ulrick Ralph Burke—*Sancho Panza's Proverbs*.

**KNOWLEDGE.** "Knowledge Box." Brain. "Knowledge is power." Bacon is the author of this expression which occurs in his *Advancement of Learning*. Knowledge does not actually mean learning acquired by reading, but it really means the gift of knowing. In its old form the word was "know-leche," "leche" being a form of the Anglo-Saxon *lac*, meaning a gift.

**KNUCKLE UNDER OR KNUCKLE TO.** To submit or yield, literally it means to kneel (for pardon). Knuckle in this phrase means the knee, and it is still used in this sense in

the phrase "a knuckle of mutton." "Knock-under" is simply a corrupt contraction of "knuckle under." "Knuckle under" and "knock-under" both signify submission, and according to Johnson refer to the old custom of striking the underside of a table with the knuckles when beaten in an argument. "Knuckler." A pick-pocket. To knuckle means to pick pocket.

**KNUIT, OR NUT.** A man about town who does nothing in particular, but devotes all his time to dressing smartly.

**KOTOW.** The Chinese word is *Ko-tou*, *Ko* meaning "knock," and *tou* meaning head. Peculiar to China, where homages are paid by touching the ground with the forehead. Hence, subservient, cringing sort of act.

**KUBBER** (Anglo Indian): News.

**KUDOS.** It is a Greek word. It used to be a University word, but is now quite a common word meaning glory, praise or honour.

## L.

**LABORATORY.** This word is formed from the Latin *elaboratorium*, which comes from *elaborare*, to work out fully and completely, or to elaborate. In the laboratories the great research work is carried on and that in itself is associated with the idea of elaboration.

**LACING.** A beating. This word is perhaps derived from giving a beating with a lash or lace. The writer has heard "I will lace your jacket," said by the mother to her little daughter in the sense of I shall thrash you.

**LADDER.** In England one often hears the expression "can't see a hole in a ladder," said of one who is intoxicated.

**LADY.** Although a "working woman" is not nowadays entitled to this distinction, it must be noted that originally she was not only not entitled to be called a "lady," but a "real lady" meaning a working house wife. The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *hlacf-dige* (*lac-dige*) literally meaning a bread-kneader. "Lady-fender." This popular term is used by servants for a mistress who does nothing but likes to sit by the fire-side. Hence it has come to mean a lazy woman who gives herself airs. "Lady Bountiful." A charitable matron.

**LAGER.** It is a German word meaning a resting-place. This word was at first in 1847 incorrectly applied to German beer to distinguish it from American and English malt drinks.

**LAID ON THE SHELF.** Anything that has ceased to be useful is said to be laid on the shelf like a book that is read

and laid aside. Spinsters are often spoken of as "hanging on the shelf."

**LAKE.** "Lake School." A name first given in derision in the *Edinburgh Review* to a number of poets, especially to Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey on account of their connection with the Lake District of England (Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire). These poets are also called Lake poets or Lakists.

**LAKER.** Many centuries ago, laker was used in the sense of players in Yorkshire and Lancashire.

**LALL SHRAB** (Anglo-Indian). It literally means red wine. But it is a name for claret in India.

**LAMB.** "To give me lamb and salad." To give one a sound thrashing.

**LAMBASTING.** A beating.

**LAME DUCK.** A member of the Stock Exchange who is unable to meet his liabilities on settling day is struck off the list and thenceforward becomes a lame duck. A duck which is lamed cannot keep its place and must naturally fall out.

**LAMM.** "To lamm" means to strike or to beat. This is an old word in English language. Beaumont and Fletcher used this word. It is derived from the old Norse *lam*, the hand. Sir Walter Scott supposed that it was derived from one Dr. Lamb, but its derivation from *lam*, the hand, seems more probable. It is now used only by people who are fond of talking slang.

**LAMP.** "The lamp of Phoebus." Poets so called the sun. "Lamp-post." A nickname for a tall individual. A synonym is "sky-topper." This word is very popular among schoolboys.

**LANCE.** A free lance. One not connected with any party.

**LAND.** "Land of Cakes." Scotland famous for its oatmeal cakes is so called. This appellation was first given to Scotland by Robert Burns in 1789. "Land of leal." Heaven. Originally it was a Scottish phrase. Gladstone once erroneously applied it to Scotland.

**LANDAU.** A four-wheeled carriage is so called, because this carriage was first invented in Landau in Germany.

**LANDED.** A man is said to be landed when he has amassed money sufficient to keep him for the rest of his life.

**LANDSCAPE.** A land picture. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *landscipe*, verb *scap—an*, to shape, to give a form or picture of.

**LANE.** The expression "a lonely lane" is really a tautology, because the word "lane" is synonymous with "lone," and it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *lane* or *lone*. The Scotch

word "lane" still signifies "lone" meaning alone. "The Lane." The Chancery Lane where are four Inns of Courts is spoken of by lawyers as "The Lane." Drury Lane Theatre too is always familiarly spoken of as "The Lane," just as people sometimes speak of Covent Garden Theatre as "The Garden."

**LANGUAGE.** This word comes from the Latin *lingua*, the tongue, akin to the Latin *lingere*, the Greek *leichen*, the Sanscrit *lib*. All these mean to lick and this shows how close is the relation of the tongue to its action. We, however, use the word language "as a general term for that which conveys thoughts, either by writing or by speech or by gesticulation or by painting and drawing."

**LANTERN-JAWED.** Applied to a long, lean countenance, with apparently hollow cheeks, bearing a fancied resemblance to a lantern. The expression occurs in Scott's *Rob Roy* and Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.

**LAP.** "To lap." To drink. "A lap-tea." A lap-tea is where there are so many guests that girls sit in one another's laps, or in those of the men, or where it is done for pleasure. "A lap-ride" is where the same thing is done on a bike. "To lap a girl" meaning to make a girl sit on your lap is a very common expression in England. "To lap the gutter." To get dead drunk or to be in the last stage of intoxication. "Gutter" is a Winchester College term meaning "a purl into the water made by the violent contact of a bather's body with the water when he falls on his stomach."

**LAPSUS.** *Lapsus lingue.* This Latin phrase literally means a slip of the tongue, and it is generally applied to an imprudent word unconsciously let fall in the course of an ordinary conversation. *Lapsus Memoriae.* This Latin phrase means a slip of memory. This is not so frequently used as *lapsus lingue*.

**LARCENY.** In English law larceny means theft (of money or goods).

**LARES AND PENATES.** "Household gods" or possessions which are sacred to the possessor. Amongst the Romans Lares were the spirits of pious ancestors whose office was to protect the fortunes of the house. Penates were natural powers personified and were supposed to bring peace and plenty.

**LARGE.** "A gentleman at large." A person who has no serious occupation.

**LARGESSE.** Among the Romans free donation of corn or clothes or other provisions were known as largesses. We use it in the sense of any general gift or bounty freely bestowed especially by great persons on occasion of rejoicing. Sir Walter Scott uses this word in his *Marmion*.



**LARK.** (Slang.) It means fun or a joke, the word being colloquial and implying mischief that usually accompanies fun and jokes. The origin is doubtful, but it may have come from the Anglo-Saxon *lac*, sport, or probably from the nautical term skylarking, that is, mounting to the highest yards and sliding down the ropes; an amusement which is sometimes allowed to be indulged in. The verb "to lark" means to sport, to tease, to spree, and the adjectives "larkish" and "larky" signify frolicsome, rowdy. In slang language this term is also applied to a boy who steals newspapers from a doorstep. I have often heard the expression "None of your half larks" with the meaning of "mind you don't fool me or make fun of me." Even here the original sense of having a joke or fun is retained. "To be up with the lark." To get up early, as, he is always up with the lark.

**LASS.** The feminine of lad is "laddess" which is abbreviated into "lass." The origin of the word "lad" is the German *latte*, which signifies a shoot, and one speaks of a youth as a "fine young sprig" of a fellow. Note that the word sprig conveys the idea of shooting.

**LASSITUDINOUS.** This is an equivalent for languid, or weary. But it is not a desirable expression.

**LAST, LATEST.** Last is a contracted form of latest, but both words are used in different senses. We say "the last page," but "the latest news." The last is opposed to the first, and the latest is opposed to the earliest. "The last run of shad" (American). Shad is a kind of American fish which is highly valued as food. When a person presents a very thin and haggard appearance as if he were played out, he is said to come in "the last run of shad."

**LATE.** "Late in the day." Too late. I say don't you think that your objection to him is rather late in the day, considering you have put up with him for so many months?

**LAUGH.** "Laugh in one's sleeve." This phrase means to laugh to one's self without being noticed and conveys the idea of chuckling secretly over another person's discomfiture with glee. In olden times the outer garments had very wide sleeves and when a person covered his face with his hand he was suspected of hiding a laugh. "Laugh on the wrong side of one's mouth or face." "When you make a person laugh on the wrong side of his face, you naturally cause him annoyance, and hence the expression means to be humiliated. Carlyle says "By and by thou wilt laugh on the wrong side of thy face." "Laughing philosopher." Democritus, the celebrated Greek philosopher was in the habit of showing his contempt for our human follies by unrestrained laughter, and hence he was called the "laughing philosopher."

**LAUREATE.** The word comes from the Latin *laurus*, meaning the bay-tree. Amongst the ancient Greeks when a poet became famous, it was the custom to crown him publicly with laurels (the bay which conveys the idea of an evergreen tree) as a token of his name remaining "evergreen," and thus being handed down to posterity. Nowadays a poet laureate is appointed by the Crown.

**LAVENDER.** "To be laid up in lavender." In pawn. The expression is taken from the practice of placing lavender in drawers in which clothes are kept. The word "lavender" is derived from the low Latin word *lavendula*, the root of which is *lavara*, to wash, and from this we have laundress and the French *lavandière* meaning washerwoman. In London streets I have often heard in autumn the shrilly shouts of poor little girls "won't you buy my sweet lavender."

**LAW.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *lagu* meaning that which "lies" in due order.

**LAY.** As a noun it means a pursuit, a scheme, a lurk (which see). It also means a piece or a quantity, as "give me a lay of pannure" i.e. give me a slice of bread. "Lay out" means a turn, as "it is my lay out" (my turn). This is Americanism. "On the lay," Shakespeare uses it in the sense of "on the look out," and Charles Dickens in that of "at work" in his *Oliver Twist*, where he says "Dodger! Charley! It's time you were on the lay." "To lay for." To ambush, as the cat is laying for a rat. "To lay it on too thick." To exceed, as in speech, splendour, expense, charges, praise, &c. "To lay over." To excel, to surpass. Mark Twain in his *A Tramp Abroad* says "Well, I've seed people could lay me over, thar." This phrase is American. "To lay one's shirt." To stake one's all, or, in common parlance, to plank down. "Lay down." A transitive word which people wrongly use intransitively in such a sentence as "I am going to lay down," which should be "I am going to lie down." Even Byron commits this blunder in *Child Harold*. "To lay heads together." To consult. "To lay to heart." To ponder over a thing and feel it deeply. "To lay low." To bury. "To lay violent hands on." To murder.

**LEADER.** (Leading article.) Newspaper articles are called "Leaders" because the lines of print are separated by a thin plate of lead in order to make those articles look more important and give them more space in the paper.

**LEANAWAY.** It is Australian slang meaning one who is tipsy. The metaphor is taken from the drunkard's reeling.

**LEARN, TEACH.** Formerly learn signified not only acquiring knowledge but imparting knowledge, and therefore it was then right to say "I will learn you this lesson." Shakespeare uses learn in the sense of teach, but it has now lost its second signification, viz., that of teaching.

**LEASE, HIRE.** For an agent to say that he has property for hire, and for a tenant to say that he leases it is wrong. Strictly speaking, it is the agent who leases, and the tenant who hires.

**LEAST.** "Least said soonest mended." This phrase means the more you try to apologise the worse you make the matter. About three hundred years ago George Wither used it.

**LEATHER, (or LATHER).** To beat or thrash. It is taken from the leather belt worn by policemen and often used by them as a weapon in street rows. "Leather-hunting." (Cricket.) In this phrase "leather" signifies the ball of which it is made. When one side keeps his opponents all day in the field and makes them run and hunt after the ball in all directions, it is said to give them a "leather-hunting."

**LEAVE.** "Leave a grey hair in, or twenty will come to its funeral." This old adage is absolutely true, for when a grey hair is pulled out, the dead fluid at the root scatters among the healthy roots and greyness follows.

**LEFT HAND.** By some it is held that left hand is that which is leaved (left), and as a rule the left hand is left out of use and the right hand mostly employed. By others it is thought that it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *leafan*, to weaken, left, weak, and as a rule the left hand is weaker than the right hand. In the English language the word "left" is associated with the idea of bad luck, and the expression "the left hand" conveys the idea of dishonesty. "A left-handed compliment." A compliment, which, though apparently meant to flatter, really depreciates. "Left-handed marriage." This means a morganatic marriage. In these marriages the husband gives the left hand to the bride instead of the right one. A morganatic marriage is one in which one of royal birth marries a woman of inferior rank. The children of such a marriage do not inherit the father's rank or estates, but are legitimate in other respects. "A left-handed oath." An oath which is not binding. "Left-handed wife." A mistress. Left or sinister is in all languages applied to that which is doubtful or bad.

**LEG.** "To give leg-bail." To escape; to run off. "Even an attorney may give leg-bail to (escape from) the power under which he lives."—Blackmore. "To make a leg." To bow in the old-fashioned way by drawing one leg backward.

**LEGACY.** What is left to a person by will is a legacy and although the legatee inherits it by the will of the bequeather, it is the law that puts the will into force. This is borne out by the derivation coming as this word does from the Latin *lex* (*legis*) meaning law.

**LEGEND.** It comes from the Latin *legendus*, meaning to be read, hence "legend" literally means something to be read,

and originally that something was part of the divine service. *Legenda* was a book containing the life-stories of saints and martyrs which were read and which were subsequently so highly tinted with exaggeration that the word "legend" took the meaning of something fabulous or traditional.

**LEGION.** It comes from the Latin *legere*, to levy and originally it meant "the troops on whom the duty of serving was laid." In ancient Rome this word signified a body of soldiers who numbered six thousand and came to mean "many." "Their name is legion" (Biblical). Their number is countless.

**LET.** This word has two meanings viz (a) to permit or to allow and (b) to hinder or to prevent. In the former sense it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *letan*, and in the latter sense it is derived from *lettan*, meaning to make late. We have the latter sense in the law phrase "without let or hindrance." "Let it slide." Leave it to chance; leave it alone; to allow a thing to pass unnoticed. The metaphor is that of watching a thing slip without trying to save it. "To let in a friend." To deceive, to defraud or trick him. "Let the band play" (American). This is a common way of crying to an orator or a speaker or an actor to begin speaking or acting. In England when anything reaches a climax, it is common practice to say "then the band played." "Letting the cat out of the bag." Giving out a secret on the impulse of the moment. Dishonest people used to tie a cat in a bag and take it to market and there try to sell it for a pig. But when the purchaser opened the bag before buying the cat naturally jumped out, revealing the fraud.

**LETTER.** Those who scribble and call their scrawl a letter may take consolation in the fact that the word is derived from the Latin *litere*, through *linere* (*litum*) to smear. The characters which are now called letters were smeared or scrawled on parchment. "Literature" also comes from the same root. "The letter of the law." The exact literal interpretation of a law or written document. "To go on the letter Q." To play billiards, the reference being to the straight tapering rod used in playing billiards viz. the cue. "Letters Patent." "Patent" comes from the Latin *pater* to lie open, and letters refer to the letters of the writing. Letters Patent are documents and they are so called because they are written on parchment paper, bearing the seal of the Crown and lying open, but not folded. The expression "it is quite patent to all" means it is quite open (obvious) to all.

**LETTERS, LITERATURE.** Letters means learning, hence we say "a man of letters" not "a man of literature." Literature relates to the species of writing which is valued for its elegance of style, such as historical and poetical works and essays. Those works which impart the positive know-

ledge of things such as chemistry, zoology, &c., cannot be classed as literature.

**LEVANT.** "To go to the levant," means to run away from one's creditors; to abscond, especially with betting or gaming losses unpaid.

**LEVELLERS.** The Radicals in the time of Charles the First and the Commonwealth were called levellers.

**LEWD.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *loewed* which is equivalent to "lay" and the word originally signified "lay" as applied to unlearned people (laymen) in contrast to the learned cleric. Down to the sixteenth century it retained this sense and a century later it degenerated into the sense of "bad vicious" until finally it took the debased meaning of unchaste or lascivious.

**LIBEL.** This comes from the Latin *libellus* meaning a little book, generally used in the sense of lampoon &c. Hence libel is a published slander and it came to be so called because of the fact that before newspapers were in general use vicious pamphlets of a libellous character were published and circulated. Originally libel meant statement of plaintiff's case which as a rule "defames" the defendant.

**LIBERAL.** It is derived from the Latin word *liberalis* meaning free-born. This word still retains a little of its old sense of "gentlemanly," as in the sentence "he had a liberal education" meaning he had the education befitting a gentleman. "Liberal party." Name of the party in British politics, formerly called Whigs since the time of the first Reform Bill. It has generally advocated extension of power for the people, and since Gladstone's Ministry has advocated Home Rule for Ireland. "Liberal Unionists." Name given to a political party which came into existence in 1886 by the secession from the Liberal party of those who opposed Gladstone's Home Rule proposals.

**LIBERTY.** It comes from the Latin *liber* meaning free. Hence liberty means "to do what one likes."

**LIBRARIAN.** It comes from the Latin *liber*, a material for writing on, which in time came to signify a book. From *liber* we have "library" (the place for books) and "librarian" (keeper of books). The French word *livre* meaning a book also comes from the Latin *liber*. The modern librarian is only expected to take charge of the library, but his prototype in Roman times had also to subscribe to the volumes by writings of his own.

**LICENSE.** It comes from the Latin *licet*, to be allowed, and it is curious to note that from this word are formed two words with entirely different meanings. "The licentiate" is one who honourably holds a license to practise his pro-

fession; the "licentious" man is one who permits himself a license in the practise of debauchery."

**LICK.** "To lick the dust." To fall in battle. "To lick the spittle off." To assume a servile, crouching attitude. "Lick and promise." In the popular sense it means doing something imperfectly. "I will just give my face a lick and a promise" means I will clean it more thoroughly later on. Hence any temporary remedy or repair which is cheap in its nature may be called a lick and a promise. "To lick into shape." To make a thing quite methodical or systematic. The popular idea is that the young of the bear are born shapeless and the dam licks them into proper shape. "Licker." Something beyond one's reach. "That is a lick to me" is a popular phrase equivalent to "that licks me" meaning that is beyond my reach.

**LICKING.** It means a beating. Ancient cant word was "lycke." The common expression is "to give one a licking." "Leathering" is beating or thrashing, the allusion is to the leather belt, worn by policeman and soldiers, which is often used as a weapon in street rows. "Tanning" also means beating or thrashing, the reference in my opinion being to the "tanning of a hide" which cannot be done without beating it. The proper expression is "I'll tan your hide" i.e. I'll give you a good beating. "Lacing" means beating, the allusion perhaps being to the giving of a beating with a lash or lacc. The proper expression "I'll lace your jacket" is not so common in England. "Lashing" is also beating, literally beating with a lash. "Drubbing" in the sense of beating is not in such common use as its other equivalents.

**LICKSPITTLE.** A vulgar term for a cringing fellow, or for one who puts up with indignities for the sake of advantages.

**LIE.** "To give the lie to." To contradict flatly. A accused B of being a turn-coat, but B gave the lie to A by proving that B still stood by the old party.

**LIFE.** "For my life or for the life of me." Literally it means "although I should have to forfeit my life as a penalty." "To bear a charmed life." A person who escapes death miraculously is said to bear a charmed life. "Life-blood." It literally means blood necessary to life, and hence vitalising influence. Advertisements are the life-blood of a newspaper.

**LIFTER.** A thief. The word survives in this sense in "shop-lifter," which is a recognised term.

**LIGHT.** "Light fingered gentry." A name for pick-pockets. "To light upon." To discover a thing accidentally or to

come across a thing by chance. "Light of carriage." A woman who is loose in conduct or morals is said to be light of carriage.

**LIKE, LOVE.** Like is less emotional than love as an expression, and is a milder term. A person likes fruit, but a husband loves his wife. "Like water on a duck's back." When you say of a person that it is like water on a duck's back, you mean that it is no use telling him anything more, for whatever you may tell him it will have no effect on him.

**LILAC.** This beautiful spring flower which is to be seen not only in the gardens of country-cottages but in the London smoke was first brought into England at the end of the sixteenth century. It is a native of Persia and its Persian name is lily. "Lily Benjamin." A white great coat, such as worn by umpires at cricket.

**LIMB.** It is an abbreviation of "the limb of the devil" and is an epithet applied to a bad-tempered child or woman. A young or obscure lawyer is called "A limb of the law." But ordinarily any lawyer is called so.

**LIME BASKET.** "As dry as a lime basket." Very thirsty. Charles Dickens uses this expression.

**LINE.** Trade, profession or calling. "What line are you in," means to which profession do you belong.

**LINEAMENT, LINIMENT.** The former means the outline of a figure; the latter is an oily liquid for rubbing the skin with to relieve pain.

**LINK.** "Linked sweetness long drawn out." This is from Milton's *L'Allegro*, and it means something which "charms" the senses for a long time.

**LIONS.** Notabilities, either persons or sights worthy of inspection; an expression dating from the times when the royal lions at the Tower, before the existence of Zoological Gardens and travelling menageries, were a London wonder, to visit which country cousins and strangers of eminence were constantly taken.—*The Slang Dictionary*.

**LIP.** "To smack one's lips." When one smacks his lips, he expresses satisfaction. Probably the reference is to the drinker of wine smacking his lips.

**LIQUOR.** "To liquor up." To drink, generally at a bar.

**LIS PENDENS.** (Latin.) A pending suit.

**LIST.** "On the list." In disfavour. An abbreviation of "on the black list."

**LITERARY CLUB.** The most important of all the eighteenth century clubs founded in 1704 by Dr. Johnson and a friend. Among its members were Goldsmith, "The representative of poetry and light literature," Burke, the eloquent, Gibbon,

the great historian, Jones, the greatest linguist and Indian scholar of the age, and Reynolds, the painter. Boswell, the devoted admirer of Johnson, also belonged to this club. As Johnson predominated over this club, the club itself, although consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's club.

**LITTLE, SMALL.** Although these words can be used almost indiscriminately in a good many applications, the word "little" must be employed, when an emotion is to be expressed as for instance "poor little girl!" "a nice little cottage" &c. "Little church round the corner." Slangily used for a public house, as in London public houses are at the corner of almost every road. "Little end of the horn." (American.) When a person produces very little effect upon others after attempting and boasting a great deal, he is said to come out at the little end of the horn. Properly speaking, it means coming to loss or grief. In the game of riddle-guessing whoever missed was obliged to drink from the little end or tip of the horn while the victor drank from the brim. "Little Englishers." It is a reproachful term applied to those who are opposed to the policy of aggressive Imperialism. "Little-go." (Colloquial.) First examination for B.A. degree at Cambridge.

**LIVE.** (Adjective.) In America, a live person is a person not only alive, but commonly intelligent, progressive, alert and practical. Such a person need not necessarily be a university man. "To live down." The expression "to live down calumny" means to ignore it and to live in such a manner as to prove that it was after all an unfounded accusation.

**LIVENER.** (Military.) An early morning drink, which makes one feel fresh.

**LIVER.** "White livered." Cowardly, meek-tempered. It is peculiar to note that the liver at one time was considered to be the seat of bravery. Similar expressions are "milk-livered," "pigeon-livered," and "lily-livered."

**LIVERY!** This word is very beautifully and correctly explained by the poet Spenser in *View of the State of Ireland* as follows: "What livery is, we by common use in England know well enough, viz., that it is allowance of horse-meat, as they commonly use the word in stabling; as, to keep horses at livery; the which word, I guess, is derived of livering or delivering forth their nightly food. So in great houses, the livery is said to be served up for all night, that is, their evening allowance for drink; and livery is also called the upper weed which a serving-man wears; so called, as I suppose, for that it was delivered and taken from him at pleasure." As a law term, "livery" means delivery.

**LIZA.** It is a sort of order to any person to be off. The popular phrase is "outside-liza."



**LOAF.** "The loaves and fishes." Material benefits, actual profits. The phrase is taken from the New Testament.

**LOAFER.** It is generally considered an Americanism and originally it meant a pilfering vagabond; but it is now applied to idlers and hangers about of every description. The term is now in common use in England. Various suggestions have been made as to the origin of this word. Of these the most feasible ones, according to Bartlett, are (a) the German *laufer*, a runner, and (b) the Dutch *landlooper*, a vagrant. The words "to loaf" means to idle about.

**LOAN, LEND.** The practice which they have in America of using the word loan as a verb should not be encouraged. Loan is a noun, and should always be correctly used as such.

**LOCUM TENENS.** One holding another's place. It properly means deputy acting especially for clergyman or doctor.

**LODE-STAR.** It is the leading-star (the Pole-star) by which mariners guide themselves. It comes from the Icelandic *leidh* which signifies a course or a leading and although this is sometimes spelt load-star, it must be observed that it has nothing whatever to do with burden or weight, as the word load may suggest. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare says "Your eyes are lode-stars."

**LOG.** "Log of a ship." It is a book which registers the rate of a ship's velocity, takes notes of the state of the weather, and records incidents of the voyage. "Log-rolling." (American.) When private friends praise up one another's works in literary reviews, such criticisms are called log-rolling. *Cornhill Magazine* explains this term as follows: "Log-rolling is a somewhat rare term in England, but is well understood at Washington. When a backwoodsman cuts down trees, his neighbours help him to roll them away, and in return he helps them with their trees; so in Congress, when members support a Bill, not because they are interested therein, but simply to gain the help of its promoters for some scheme of their own, their action is called log-rolling."

**LOGY.** (American.) A dull, awkward fellow is spoken of as a regular logy. This word has got nothing to do with "log" meaning a piece of wood, but is, in all probability, derived from the Dutch word *log* meaning heavy or slow.

**LONELY, SOLITARY.** Solitary is derived from *solus* meaning alone, and therefore solitary indicates absence of society or life. Lonely carries with it the suggestion of being forsaken. A solitary person may enjoy his own society without necessarily feeling lonely, yet a person in the midst of the society of others may feel lonely. "Lonely furrow." This phrase originated with Lord Rosebery, who once said in a speech that he was ploughing a lonely furrow which means

that he had detached himself from all party ties and was expressing his own independent views.

**LONG.** "The long home." The modern expression is the narrow house. It means the grave. When a good or great man dies, people generally say while speaking of him that he has gone to the long home. But it may be observed that "going home" is a gardening term. Where a tree is in a poor way, a gardener always says of it "Ah, he is going home." "To draw the long bow." To exaggerate. In whatever he says, he always draws the long bow.

**LOO.** "For the good of the loo." For the benefit of the company or the community.

**LOOK, SEE.** The former refers to a wish formed in the mind, while the latter refers to the sight only. One looks voluntarily, but sees involuntarily. For instance, when you pass along the Bazaar, you see lots of shops, but you look at a shop where you intend to purchase something. You see a thing without wishing to look at it, but you look at a thing after you have made up your mind to turn your eyes towards it. "To look a gift horse in the mouth." To criticise what is given to one as a gift or present. The age and value of a horse are always ascertained by its mouth being examined, and hence the phrase.

**LOOM.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *gelona*, meaning utensils, and formerly it signified any domestic utensil. We still retain the original sense in the word "heir-loom" which means any family possession such as chattel, furniture, jewellery &c. which descends by custom to the heir. As verb, it means to appear large, as things often do by refraction at sea.

**LOOSE.** "Loose fish." A dissipated man or a man of doubtful character is called a "loose fish." Probably this phrase is due to the fact that corruption soon sets in when a fish is dead. A synonym is "queer fish."

**LORD.** This word has developed its meaning. "Lord" comes from *hlaf* meaning bread and *weard* meaning guardian. Hence lord originally meant guardian of bread or bread-conserver. When printed in capital letters it means God, but when printed in ordinary type it means master or lord.

**LOSE.** "To lose the combination." (American.) To miss the point of anything. In conversation one may be heard to say to the speaker "Hold on, then, I have lost the combination."

**LOTUS-EATERS.** In Greek legends, lotus-eaters were a people who ate the fruit and drank the juice of the "lotus," a prickly shrub possessing the property of causing consumers to lose all thoughts of home and kindred and to sink into a drowsy stupor, half awake and half asleep. The term is

sometimes applied to persons who forget all claims of country, relations and friends. A man who leads a languid and listless life is also described by some authors of eminence as a lotus-eater. Tennyson often uses this expression.

**LOUD.** A person who makes himself showy or flashy either by his manners or his dress is said to be loud.

**LOUNGE.** The word originated from Eton School meaning, a treat.

**LOVE.** The term "love" at billiards, in tennis, and sometimes at whist, signifies "no score," and "love all" means no points on either side. In one sense of the word "love" denotes something which is done without reciprocity, as in the phrase "I'll do it for love" *i.e.* "I'll do it for nothing," and most probably the use of the word in the tennis game in the sense of "no score" is taken from the idea of "nothing." "Love-locks." Locks of hair hanging near or over the ears; fashionable more or less from the time of Elizabeth to Charles I. Sailors term the curls which they wear on their temples love-locks. The word is also used in the sense of heart-breaker. "Love me little, love me long." It means "do not love me too much at once and cease to love me soon." This phrase is found in Christopher Marlowe's works (1565-1593). "Love me love my dog." It means "if you love me you will have to like all that belongs to me." "There is no love lost between them." There is mutual dislike between them, that is, they dislike each other. "Love in a cottage." Marriage between a couple who marry without a sufficient income to live in a fashionable style.

**LOW.** "Low-priced." Low-priced does not necessarily mean cheap. On the contrary a low-priced article may eventually prove to be dear, if it turns out to be of no use at all. "Low-water mark" (At). Without any funds or money. I can't lend you anything, as I am at low-water mark myself.

**LOWER CHAMBER.** The House of Commons.

**LOYALTY.** "The word loyalty, which is derived from the French *loi*, law, expresses properly that fidelity which one owes according to law, and does not necessarily include that attachment to the royal person which, happily, we in England have been able further to throw into the word."—Trench.

**LUCID.** "Lucid intervals." When a lunatic has moments of peace and sanity; these moments are called lucid intervals. It is worth noting that many celebrated writers such as Bacon, Johnson, and Burke have used this phrase.

**LUCIFER.** The chief rebel angel, Satan, the devil. It literally means light-bringing, hence morning star. Milton uses this word in *Paradise Lost*.

**LUCK.** "Down on one's luck." Wanting money. A similar expression is "low-down." "Old shoes for luck." Few people are aware of the origin of the old custom of throwing shoes after a newly married couple. Many people are under the impression that it is done "for luck," whereas it is merely a corruption of a very old proceeding when the bride's father used to hand over a shoe to the bridegroom as a sign that he gave him full possession of his daughter. From all times shoes have denoted possession—as the old expression of "stepping into his shoes," shows. When a Bedouin chief is dying, one of his last acts is to hand over to his eldest son, or whoever his heir may be, his shoes as a token of his taking his place. In many Eastern cities a pair of shoes placed outside a shut door mean that no one dare enter, and in Benares if a woman wishes to turn her attention from her market bag for a moment, she makes sure that it will be untouched by leaving her shoes by it. Even in the Bible the shoe is used as a symbol of possession, for Ruth's relative handed over a shoe to Boaz as a sign that he gave him Ruth and her land.—*Pearson's Weekly*. "To cut one's lucky" or "To make one's lucky." To escape or run away quickly. Charles Dickens uses this phrase in *Oliver Twist*.

**LUCRE.** This word does not mean merely money, but gain, as its derivation implies. It comes from the Latin *lucrum* meaning gain and is akin to the Greek *leia*, booty, the Hindu *lut*, loot, and the Sanskrit *lotra*, stolen goods. Hence it is not surprising that we often hear the phrase "filthy lucre."

**LOUDICROUS, MONSTROUS.** Ludicrous comes from the Latin *ludere* meaning to play, and anything that is ludicrous is laughable in a somewhat contemptible manner. Monstrous comes from the Latin *monstrum* meaning a show or portent, and literally signifies something worth pointing the finger at.

**LUG.** Slangily used in the sense of to carry about, as I can't lug this big book about with me to the theatre. A similar slang expression is "to cart about." "In lug." In pawn. His overcoat is in lug for some days past.

**LUMBER-ROOM.** It takes its name from the Lombards who were the original pawnbrokers, and the apartment where the pledges were kept was the Lombard or lumber-room. Hence miscellaneous articles of furniture and clothing placed together in a lump or heap are called lumber. The name of the famous Lombards is preserved in Lombard Street and Lombard Court in London. "Lumberer." A person who sponges upon acquaintances at public houses with a view to get drinks out of them is called a lumberer. The word is derived from *lumber* meaning to loiter about lazily.

**LUMP IT.** To dislike it. "Lump it" is most commonly used in the phrase "If you don't like it, you may lump it" meaning if you don't like it, you may get rid of it by

swallowing it. The word lump is thought to be a corruption of the old English word *lomp* meaning it happened, hence to lump it literally means to take what may chance. "A lump sum." A sum given at one time so as to cover other smaller payments. "To have a lump in one's throat." To feel like weeping.

**LUMPER.** A contractor who contracts to deliver a ship laden with timber. The cheap stevedore is called a lumper. (See Stevedore.)

**LUMPY.** It has two meanings (a) costly, for instance, lumpy books means costly books, and (b) it is a cricket term and is applied to denote rough ground. "The wicket was unsatisfactory, and the batsmen complained that it was lumpy."—*The Evening News*.

**LUNATIC.** Its literal meaning is "influenced by the moon (*luna*)," hence insane.

**LUNCHEON.** This is a corruption of "lunching" and "lunch" is, strange to say, the equivalent of "lump" of Scandinavian origin. The hump on a camel's back is a lump and a lunch of bread is a lump of bread. Hence hunch easily became lunch (a piece of bread). In Sussex and Hampshire, they call it "nuncheon" which may be a corruption of luncheon; but "nun" undoubtedly refers to the time of the day when this meal (lunch) is taken, viz. the noon.

**LUNGEOUS.** Ill-tempered, restive, said of a horse. This word is rather obsolete now.

**LUNY.** An abbreviation of lunatic. The common phrase is "go along, you lunny."

**LURCH.** "To leave in the lurch." To leave in a helpless condition. "The metaphor" "in the lurch" carries with it some sense of unfair treatment, or of some advantage taken."

"My master carries me to church,  
And often am I blamed,  
Because I leave him in the lurch  
As soon as text is named."

"The meaning is that, unknown to his master, the boy sneaks out of church after first hearing the text given out, so that he may use it as evidence that he was present during sermon time." "To lie at lurch." To lie in wait. "To give a lurch." To deceive.

**LURID.** This word should not be used interchangeably with brilliant. Lurid means "giving a ghastly or dull-red light, as of flames mingled with smoke, or reflecting or made visible by such light."

**LURK.** It is an old cant word used for every kind of swindle or trick or "lay." Many kinds and modes of thieving and begging are called "lurking," for instance, "the dead lurk" is the art of entering dwelling-houses during divine service,

and "lurker" is an imposter who solicits alms by means of false letters or by shamming distress. "Lurk" literally means "eye" and the word has come to signify to observe closely as to where the object may be gained by false pretences or things may be stolen.

**LUSCIOUS.** Corrupted from "delicious," which in old times was shortened to "licious." "Good drynk thereto, lycyas and fine."—*Reliq. Antiq.*, page 30.

**LUSH.** (a) Rich, luxuriant, as applied to vegetables. (b) Intoxicating drink, hence lushy means tipsy. Shakespeare uses this word in the sense of luxury, and Charles Dickens in that of drinking to excess in *Oliver Twist*, and (c) in the Eton sense of the word it means dainty.

**LUSHINGTON.** A low, drunkard fellow. Years ago there was a "Lushington Club" in Bow Street, Covent Garden, where the unfortunate Edmund Kean and his followers used to turn night into day. It comes from the word lush meaning to drink.

**LUSTRUM.** Among the ancient Romans lustrum was a space of five years, and at such times the ceremony of purification was performed. The Latin word *luere* means to purify, and lustrum means a purification.

**LUXURIANT, LUXURIOUS.** Luxuriant means abundant, and luxurious means that which implies luxury. A tree may have a luxuriant growth of leaves, and a person may live in luxurious ease. Shakespeare uses luxurious in the sense of lustful.

**LUXURY.** Everybody knows what luxury means and especially those who indulge in it. Let them, however, be guided by the warning given by the derivation of the word, which is the Latin *luxus* means excess. No need to make any further comments.

**LYNCH LAW.** (American.) When a mob roughly handles an offender without any proper trial by judge, counsel or witnesses, such a procedure is known as "lynch law."

## M.

**MAB.** A mab is a cab or a hackney coach. A harlot is also so called.

**MACARONI.** This word comes from the Italian *maccheroni*, meaning a mixture, and macaroni is a typical Italian dish. This word is also used to denote a coxcomb and in that sense owes its origin to the Macaroni Club which was organised by a handful of young Englishmen who had travelled in Italy and on their return home had introduced the "Macaroni" in England at the end of the eighteenth

century. The members of this club were given to foppishness and rakishness and went by the name of "Macaroni."

**MACASSAR OIL.** First exported from Macassar, the capital of the Celebes, and hence the name. It was used as hair-oil and that created the need of anti-macassars—the cloth pieces thrown over the back of the chair so that a person leaning his head against it might not spoil the chair.

**MACHIAVELLIAN.** The Italian statesman Niccolo Machiavelli maintained that the rulers were justified in their treacherous dealings with the ruled on account of the wickedness of the latter. This term is applied to those who resort to double-dealing practices in order to gain their own object or to add to political power. It is originally a political term. The expression "Machiavellian policy" means a political policy of duplicity.

**MAD.** This word should not be loosely used for "angry." "Mad as a hatter." This is a corruption of "mad as an adder" (adder), meaning venomous as a viper.

**MADAM.** Madam is "my lady."

**MADEMOISELLE.** This is French for miss; *ma* meaning my, and *demoiselle* meaning damsel, that is, young unmarried woman.

**MADRIGAL.** The origin of this word is uncertain. It denotes a short lyrical poem, the general theme of which is love. It was invariably written in iambic metre, running principally on three lines. A simple song sung without any musical accompaniment is also termed a madrigal, and there is a musical association in London called the Madrigal Society of London which was founded in 1741.

**MAGAZINE.** It is an altered form of the Arabic *maghazin* meaning a store-house. Hence a magazine means a place for stores. It is also applied to a periodical from the fact that the articles contained in it are preserved better than those appearing in a newspaper, a magazine being a place for storing.

**MAGGOTS.** Whims, fancies. Hence "maggoty" means fidgety, fanciful. At one time it was popularly believed that small maggots were generated in the brain of man and that the fretting of these insects created foolish fancies.

**MAGI.** The wise men of the East. This word is a Latinised rendering of the Greek *magoi*. In Persia they were a sacred sect who eventually sank into mere magicians.

**MAGNET.** So called from the name of the city of Magnecia, in Asia Minor, where the loadstone is said to have been discovered. Some authorities think that it comes from the name of Magnes, a shepherd "who is said to have discovered the magnetic power through being detained on Mount Ida by

the magnetism of the mountain attracting the nails in his shoes, so that he was unable to move from the spot."

**MAGNUM OPUS.** (Latin.) Masterpiece or great work. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* is his *magnum opus*.

**MAGPIE.** An abbreviation or contraction of the old name magot-pie. Nares inclines to the belief that magot comes from the French *magot*, meaning a monkey, because the bird magpie plays tricks like a monkey. "Mag" is a pet-name for "Margaret" and "pie" comes from the Latin *pica* from *pingere* to paint, and a "magpie" looks like a black feathered bird painted with white patches. There are many English birds in whose names the combination of pet-name occurs such as "Jack-daw," "Jenny-wren," "Robin-redbreast," "Tom-tit" &c. The last explanation is more worthy of note.

**MAHOGANY.** It means a dining table, the allusion being to the mahogany wood of which the table is made. Hence, the expression "to have one's foot under another man's mahogany" is to sit at his table, be supported on other than one's own resources.

**MAIDEN SPEECH.** A speaker's first speech is his maiden speech. Beaconsfield's maiden speech was not applauded by his listeners.

**MAIL.** Formerly it meant a bag in which travellers on horseback carried their luggage. Bailey is of opinion that it comes from a Greek word for a fleece, because these bags were made of wool, and this may be the origin of the mail bag of the Post Office.

**MAIN CHANCE (THE).** Money, material welfare. Most business men have an eye to the main chance.

**MAIN GUY.** The circus cant gave rise to this phrase, rather vulgar, and it designates the manager of an establishment.

**MAINTENANCE.** In law the term maintenance means to instigate a person to bring an action without reasonable and probable cause against another person, and the person instigating is liable to the person against whom the action is brought, in damages. But, of course, a person is entitled when actuated by a charitable feeling or by kinship, to assist another in order to assert his rights. Thus if A, without reasonable and probable cause, instigates B to bring an action against C, A is liable in damages. It should, however, be noted that the doctrine of maintenance does not apply to criminal proceedings.

**MAKE.** "To make away with oneself." To take one's own life. In order to avoid the ordeal of a trial, the culprit made away with himself. "To make bricks without straw." This phrase is taken from the Bible and it means to work without



having the necessary materials to go upon. "To make eyes at." To gaze at one in a flirty or coquettish manner. "Knuts" are fond of making eyes at "flappers." "To make head or headway against." To strive against an obstacle and succeed. The ship had to make headway against a very strong wind. "To make one tired." Colloquially used for "to weary" either by silly stories or by stupid conversation. It is an expression which is avoided by all persons of refinement. "To make things hum." In this expression there is an allusion to the machinery humming, when it is working at full speed and hence it means to use more than ordinary energy. This won't do; we must buck up and try and make things hum. "Make tracks." This American phrase means to quit or to vanish. When a native left his home and went elsewhere to seek his fortune all he left behind was the track of his waggon to show that he had quitted the country. The old cant word "make" meant a penny or halfpenny, and hence, the American expression "On the make" signifies "after making money" which usually carries with it the idea not only of cleverness, but of unscrupulousness. From this also comes the American expression "A make" in the sense of a successful theft or swindle, "makings" means profits. Theatrically "make up" refers to the materials for making up an appearance, and hence "A make up" means an appearance assumed by an actor by costume, by painting his face &c. Generally it is used of an appearance by dress &c. This should not be confused with the phrase "make it up" which means to be reconciled after a quarrel.

**MALIGNANTS.** The parliament of Charles I. applied this term to those whom they looked upon as the evil advisers of the King, among whom Laud and Strafford were considered the most dangerous. Afterwards it came to be applied to all who sided with the King against the parliament.

**MAMMON.** This word in Syriac means riches, hence mammon has become the god of this world, which is always in search of wealth. "Mammon of unrighteousness." A Biblical phrase for "money."

**MAMMOTH.** This is the name for a large extinct elephant. This word is taken from the Russian *mammot*. The word mammoth is now frequently used as an adjective in the sense of "huge" as a mammoth building, a mammoth meeting.

**MAMMY.** Boys and girls call their mother "mammy," "mam" or "ma," and this word is confined to the dialect of the nursery. In America this word is used to signify a coloured woman in charge of white children.

**MAN.** "Man in the street." This expression simply means an average man with an average knowledge of things. "Man of the world." An experienced man who is not a greenhorn.

"Man of letters." A man of great culture, usually applied to an author. "Man of remnants." A tailor. "Man of wax." A model man, like one moulded in wax. "Man of Belial." The word "Belial" indicates worthlessness, and hence the expression means a wicked man. "Man of straw." Man who owns nothing and has, therefore, nothing to lose. A number of worthless men used to hang about law courts with a straw in their shoe, showing thereby that they were ready to swear to anything as witnesses for a bribe. It is no good my executing decree against him, as he is a man of straw, that is, a man without means. "Man-of-war." A line-of-battle ship. Although ships are spoken of as feminine in the English language, it is peculiar that a battleship is called a man-of-war. Talbot says "men of war" were heavy armed soldiers. A ship full of them would be called a man-of-war ship. In process of time the word "ship" was discarded as unnecessary, and there remained the phrase "a man-of-war." "Man alive!" This exclamation is used, when one hears something very startling. He listened for a while, and then suddenly exclaimed, "man alive! what are you saying?" (See "Well! I never did!") "The man in the moon." An imaginary person inhabiting the moon and knowing nothing about the affairs of the world. He knows no more about this subject than the man in the moon. "You'll be a man before your mother." This expression is used jocularly to a lad to encourage him. When Sir Walter Scott was a boy, Burns so addressed him on a memorable occasion. "A man in a thousand." One man of excellence from among a thousand. "A man of parts." A man of ability, that is, a man of more than ordinary intellect. "To man-handle." A nautical expression meaning "to move by force of man without levers &c." It is generally used in the sense of maltreating or roughly handling a person, such as taking him prisoner, or thrashing him, or turning him out of a room.

**MANNA.** A corruption of *man-hu* which Hebrew word literally means "what is this?" "When the children of Israel saw it (the small round thing like hoarfrost on the ground), they said to one another "What is this?" Manna means heavenly food, that is, food dropped from heaven.

**MANNER.** "To the manner born." It means familiar with something from birth, and shows that the thing which a person does to perfection is something to which he is familiar from birth. He accomplished the great task as if he were to the manner born.

**MANNERLESS.** Although there is such a word as mannerless in the English language, and hence a mannerless person is one who has no manners, people careful of diction would use unmannerly for mannerless.

**MANSION HOUSE.** The official residences of the Lord Mayors of London and Dublin are so called. House really is redundant, because it means the same as mansions, but it must be observed that Bacon in his *Use of the Law* uses the term mansion house for dwelling house. Mansion comes from the Latin *mansio* which was a tent pitched for soldiers on the march. Subsequently it came to be applied to a roadside house.

**MANTEL, MANTLE.** In Middle English mantel was mantel, and thus the one is the same as the other. But now mantel is a shelf over a fire-place and from this we have the terms mantel-piece and mantel-shelf; and mantle is a cloak or covering. The mantle in a light is the covering, and figuratively mantle means the cloak of responsibilities and duties, as, for instance, the immortal Budka's mantle fell upon his successor. Sometimes the words mantel and mantle are still used interchangeably. "Mantel-piece." Originally a shelf above the fire-place on which mantles (wet clothes) were hung to dry. Although the shelves over the fire-places are still called mantel-pieces, mantles are not hung up there to dry. In some of the old palaces of Rome the mantel-pieces are still seen used for the original purpose.

**MANURE.** It comes from the French *manoeuvrer* meaning to work with the hand (to till the soil). Milton uses it in this sense in *Paradise Lost* where he says:—

"Yon flowery arbours, with branches overgreen  
That mock our scant manuring."

It is easy to see how the word came to be applied to the thing with which the land is dressed with a view to till the soil.

**MARATHON RACE.** A long distance foot race. A Grecian warrior ran from Marathon to Athens carrying the news of the defeat of the Persian army in 490 B.C., and hence the expression.

**MARCH.** Named after Mars, the Roman God of War.

**MARCH.** When used as a verb, it comes from the Celtic *marc*, Welch *march*, meaning a horse. Hence the word originally meant to ride on horseback.

**MARCONIGRAM.** A wireless telegraph is so called after William Marconi, the famous inventor of wireless telegraphy.

**MARE.** "A mare's nest." When a person imagines that he has made a great discovery which eventually turns out to be non-existent (nothing) he is said to have discovered a mare's nest. The ancient Saxons imagined that a vampire or demon caused nightmare by sitting on the sleeper's breast and that this vampire sat on the treasure which was called its nest. In fact this treasure only existed in their imagina-

tion. "Money makes the mare to go." It is money that enables a person to carry out things successfully. Some maintain that the proper phrase is "Money makes the Mayor to go," as the Lord Mayor cannot have his public show without spending a lot of money. The latter seems more sensible. "Shanks's mare." The legs. "I am riding shanks's mare (walking) to-day." "The grey mare." A woman who is cleverer than her husband is so called.

**MARIGOLD.** This beautiful flower which carries with it poetic inspiration is so called, because it is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It is for that reason that marigold-windows in "Lady" chapels are to be seen. These flowers are also called King-cups because of their size.

**MARINE.** An incompetent sailor at sea is called by this nickname. "Tell it to the horse marines." A phrase commonly used to show disbelief in the truth of a story—arose from the fact that when Marines first went to sea they were naturally somewhat "green" concerning nautical matters. Hence anyone who spun a very tall yarn was bidden to "tell it to the horse marines (or the marines)," the idea being that they were easily gulled.—*Answers*, May 9th, 1914.

**MARKER.** In tennis or billiards a marker is one who teaches the game. It is also a Cambridge University term, signifying a person who is employed to walk up and down chapel during service and whose duty is to pick off the names of the students present.

**MARKET OVERT.** (French.) An open market. Any sale or bargain in fairs or *markets overt* is binding in the eyes of law. Thus if a person buys a stolen property in *market overt*, he cannot be charged with having received stolen property.

**MAROON.** "To be marooned." It means to be left alone and deserted on an island. It was, at one time, common practice with pirates.

**MARRIAGE LINES.** A marriage certificate.

**MARROW.** It properly means the fat contained in the osseous tubes and cells of the bones, and, hence, figuratively, it signifies pith; the best part; the essence.

**MARROW, MATE.** Both these words imply companionship, but they differ in signification. Marrow conveys the idea not only a partner, but of an equal, such as a lover of spouse, although colliers use this word in the sense of "mate," viz., that of fellow-workman. "Mate" is originally a sea-term. A sailor calls a fellow-sailor his mate. The lower classes in England apply the term "mate" to a friend, companion or partner. The word marrow is almost obsolete.

**MARRY.** This expletive owes its origin to the old practice of swearing by the Virgin Mary and "marry" means By Mary (the Virgin). In *Hamlet* Shakespeare says—"Marry, 'tis Michel Angelo, it means mischief."

**MARS.** God of war.

**MART.** It is a shortened form of market, and Shakespeare uses it in *Hamlet*.

**MARTINET.** A strict disciplinarian, from Col. Martinet, a young French officer in the reign of Louis XIV., who thoroughly reorganised the Infantry.

**MASCOT.** Bringer of good luck. This word was first made popular by Audran's comic opera *La Mascotte*, in 1880. Probably derived from the Portuguese word *mascotte* meaning witchcraft. A mascot may be either person or thing.

**MASH.** This word first came into use in America in connection with the stage in 1866. When an actress ogled some friend in the audience, she was said to mash him, and for so doing she had to pay a forfeit from her salary. Probably this word was suggested by the gypsy word *mash* which means to entice or allure, and a woman always ogles (gives a glad eye to) a man in order to entice him with her charms. In America "mash" was in use before the substantive "masher" which more or less belongs to England. From this American sense of the word, we have the expressions "on the mash," "to go on the mash," "to be mashed on one," which all convey the idea of amorous propensities on the part of the person who mashes. A girl often calls her sweetheart "mash" or "masher." A "masher" is really one who tries to produce the effect of mashing and in order to produce this effect he resorts to foppish dresses and ingratiating manners. Hence "a masher" carries the idea of a swell or a dandy or a "flasher," and he often fancies himself a lady-killer. "Mashy eyes" means glad eyes. He looked at her with mashy eyes.

**MASK, MASQUE.** They both mean a disguise for the face; masked entertainment. It should be noted that these words primarily carry with them more the sense of entertainment than that of disguise.

**MASSACRE OF INNOCENTS (THE).** The announcement which the leader of the House of Commons makes at the end of a session of the measures that are abandoned for want of time is so called. Thus it is a Parliamentary term in that sense.

**MASSES.** The word masses in the sense of common people has become too common to be criticised, although, strictly speaking, masses should be specified.

**MAST.** "A man before the mast." A common sailor, as distinguished from the officers who are men behind the main mast.

**MASTER.** "The Master of the Rolls." The Master of the Rolls is an Equity Judge, and has charge of all patents, charters, commissions, deeds and recognisances, entered upon rolls of parchment, and hence his title.

**MASTERLY INACTIVITY.** The phrase was first used by Sir James Mackintosh in *Vindiciae Gallicae*.

**MATINEE.** It comes from the French *matin* meaning morning, and yet we call "an afternoon performance" or "an afternoon reception" a matinee.

**MATRICULATE.** To matriculate is to admit (student) to privileges of University, and hence, the matriculation examination, the passing of which entitles one to such admission.

**MATRIMONIAL MART.** The colloquial expression "are you a candidate in the matrimonial mart" (market) means are you on the look out for a wife or a husband as the case may be?

**MAUSOLEUM.** This word takes its name from the tomb of Mausolus, the King of Caria, to whom his wife erected a splendid monument at Halicarnassus in 353 B.C.

**MAXIM.** In the sense of a single-barrelled quick-firing machine gun, maxim is so called after its inventor, Sir Hiram S. Maxim.

**MAY.** From *Maia*, a Roman goddess, worshipped on the first day of this month. "May your shadow never grow less." It is a familiar salutation. The origin is dim, but may be as follows: It is well-known that after a man reaches the age of about fifty-five his stature grows shorter, therefore his shadow must be less. To say "may your shadow never grow less" means, "may you never grow older."—*Pearson's Weekly*.

**MAYOR.** This is a late spelling, introduced in the middle of the sixteenth century, of the word "major" which means greater.

**MEALY-MOUTHED.** It comes from the Greek *melimuthos*, meaning honey-speeched and is applied to a person with a sweet tongue which nothing ruffles. In common parlance, a mealy-mouthed person is one who is apt to mince matters, soft spoken.

**MEAN.** The literal meaning of this word is common, and relates to the humble origin of a person. In English it is used as a synonym for "stingy" or "parsimonious." In America it is applied to signify "ill-tempered" or "disagreeable," but this is a misuse of the word. As verb, it originally means to have in the mind, and hence to intend.

**MEANDER.** Winding as of a stream. It comes from the zig-zag course of the river Meander in Phrygia.

**MEASLES.** This word comes from the French *mesean* or *mesel* meaning a leper, and originally it meant leprosy. Chaucer uses it in that sense.

**MEASURE.** "To measure sword with another." To fight with him, and use the sword as weapon. "So we measured swords and parted."—Shakespeare.

**MEAT.** At one time meat meant food of any kind, and this sense is still retained in the word sweetmeat.

**MECCA.** The most sacred place of the Mahomedans who go there on pilgrimage every year. Hence, figuratively, a particular place of central importance is so called, as "Paris is the Mecca of artists."

**MEDES.** "The laws of the Medes and Persians." Irrevocable laws. The expression occurs in the Book of Daniel, chapter vi.

**MEDITERRANEAN.** It comes from the Latin *medius*, middle, and *terra*, land. It is applied to the sea between Europe, Asia and Africa.

**MEDLEY, MEDDLE.** Both these words come from the same source. Meddle originally means to mix, hence, one who meddles in your affairs is literally one who mixes himself (interferes) in your affairs. Medley is literally mixture, and whenever things get mixed, there is a confusion. Although "muddle" means to confuse, it is not connected with either of these. It literally means "to dabble in mud," and is frequentative from mud.

**MEET.** "To meet half-way." Two persons holding two different views and giving in to each other by mutual concession are said to meet each other half-way. "To meet one's engagements." To pay one's debts as they become due.

**MELLIFLUOUS.** It comes from the Latin *mel*, honey, and *fluens*, flowing, and literally it means "flowing like honey," hence, sweet. Note that the word "fluent" also comes from the Latin *fluere*, to flow, and hence a fluent speaker is one from whose mouth words flow easily.

**MELODRAMA.** This term defies an exact definition. A melodrama is a sensational piece, part tragedy, part comedy, and it always ends happily. Perhaps it is melodrama which more than any other kind of play deals with the every day occurrences of life without rising to dramatic sublimity.

**MELPOMENE.** The muse who presides over tragedy.

**MEMORANDA.** This word should never take a singular verb, because it is the plural of memorandum.

**MEMORY, REMEMBRANCE, RECOLLECTION.** Memory is the general name for the power of remembering. Remembrance is something which memory remembers, and, therefore, an act of memory. Recollection is an act of remembrance, but of a more laborious kind.

**MERCURY.** (Greek *Hermes*.) The God of eloquence and commerce. Mercury is also called the God of thieves, as he stole Apollo's bow, the trident of Neptune, etc.

**MERE.** This word which is frequently used in poetry corresponds to the Latin *mare*, from which is derived the word marine. Mere forms the first part of the word mermaid.

**MERELY, SIMPLY.** Merely implies no addition, and simply denotes no admixture, and the former should not be used for the latter. It would be wrong to say that we were all there simply as spectators, and it would be equally wrong to say that we merely cannot believe it.

**MERMAID.** A fabled sea-maiden having the upper part like that of a woman, and the lower like that of a fish.

**MERRY,** (merrie, as in Merrie England). The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon "*maera*" meaning illustrious, renowned, great. Originally it did not mean mirthful or cheerful, but it meant illustrious, as in "Merrie England." It is commonly believed that "merrie England" means gay England, but it means illustrious England, as the root clearly explains. Spenser used the word "merry" in the sense of agreeable:—

"Then eke my feeble bark awhile may stay,  
Till merry wind and weather call her thence away."

**MERRY ANDREW.** One who regales others with antics and buffoonery. A surname given to Dr. Andrew Borde, physician to Henry the Seventh, who had a reputation for buffoonery. "Merry as a cricket." Similar expressions are "merry as a lark," "merry as a grigg." The common expressions now used are "happy as a sandboy," and "happy as an umbrella-maker."

**MESSE PROFITS (LEGAL).** Rents and profits of land accrued while it was in the possession of a person not legally entitled.

**MESS.** It is now applied to soldiers dining together. "Mess" means four from the old custom of arranging the guests at the dining tables in rows of four, and Shakespeare uses it in the sense of four in *Love's Labour Lost*, where he says "You three fools lacked me, fool, to make up the mess" (that is, four). Again Shakespeare in *Henry VI.* calls the four sons of Henry his "mess of sons." Latin, English, French and Spanish are called "a mess of tongues" (four languages). Lyly says "Foure makes a messe, and we have



a mess of masters." Dr. Brewer contends that though four make a "mess," the word really comes from the "Anglo-Saxon *mese*, like the Latin *mensa*=table, *mes* Gothic=dish, whence Benjamin's mess, a mess of pottage &c." When mess is used to denote confusion it comes from the German *mischen*, to mix. We often say "Don't make a mess of it."

**METAPHOR, SIMILE.** Metaphor is a figure of speech which is founded upon the resemblance of one thing to another. A metaphor differs from simile not in substance, but in form, as both are founded upon comparison. In the case of metaphor the comparison is implied instead of being formally expressed, whereas in simile the things compared should not be alike in too many particulars. Dr. J. C. R. Ewing is a pillar of the Forman Christian College, Lahore, India. This is an example of metaphor. But when we say that Dr. J. C. R. Ewing upholds the Forman Christian College like a pillar which supports the weight of a whole edifice, it is simile. When a term is figuratively used, whether the figure be founded on resemblance, or on some other relation which two objects bear to each other, that too is called metaphor, for instance, when "grey hairs" are used for "old age," some writers call that too a metaphor. But, strictly speaking, it is not metaphor, but metonymy, that is, the effect for the cause. Grey hairs do not bear any resemblance to old age, but they are the effect of old age. It should not be forgotten that the judicious use of metaphor adds light and beauty to the expression, and vigour and energy to the sentiment: but, on the contrary, when this figure is employed unskilfully or is carried too far, it not only fails to produce its desired effect, but in many cases conceals the writer's meaning. Hence one should be most careful in the use of metaphor, which is the most important of all figures, and occurs so frequently that we can hardly utter a sentence without employing it.

**METHODISTS.** Some think that on account of the methodical habits of the Wesleyans this term was originally applied to them.

**METROPOLIS.** It literally means a mother city, and the capital of the country is called the metropolis.

**METTLE.** This is another spelling of metal, and Shakespeare makes no distinction in the use of these words, especially in allusion to the metal (or mettle) of a sword-blade. We now use the word mettle with the general meaning of spirit or ardour, as for instance "that horse has got plenty of mettle in him."

**MEWS.** Originally it was a place for hawks or cages for birds. As at one time the "mews" were used for keeping the king's falcons, the word is now used to designate stables.

**MICKLE.** "Every mickle makes a muckle." This is a misrendering of a familiar Scotch proverb which should be "mony a little macks a meikle" meaning in English "many a small makes a big." Mickle and muckle are one and the same word, differently spelt.

**MIDAS' EARS.** Ears that cannot appreciate music. When Apollo and Pan contested for musical superiority, everybody declared for the former except Midas, to whom Apollo afterwards gave asses' ears for his stupidity.

**MIDDLE AGES.** This term denotes the periods intervening between the ancient and modern historical periods, namely, the period between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries.

**MIGHTY.** This word when used as a synonym for exceedingly, very, is vulgar. Such phrases as "I am mighty pleased to receive your letter," "a mighty clever fellow," "mighty fine," "a mighty shame," &c. should not be used.

**MILK.** In the turf parlance "to milk" is to bet against one's own horse which is not meant to win, or in other words, to lay against a horse fraudulently. To milk a telegram is to get access to it before the addressee with a view to make a surreptitious use of it, and to guard against this being done, Government and Press telegrams are written in cipher. A milk-livered person means a cowardly timid person. Milk-sop, literally it means bread sopped in milk, hence an effeminate or soft man is so called. "That accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut." That explains matters. "Milk and water." Insipid, feeble, tasteless. The story he related had a great deal of milk and water in it. "The milk of human kindness." Natural feelings of kindness, pity, compassion, sympathy, &c. Shakespeare says :—

"I fear thy nature ;  
It is too full of the milk of human kindness  
To catch the nearest way."

**MILLER.** "To give one the miller." To give the miller is to wrap flour in thin paper which, when thrown at the person aimed at breaks and smothers him. Hence, to give one the miller is to entertain a person with an apparently friendly conversation until a sufficient number of people have gathered round him to pelt him with flour, garbage and other obnoxious things, flour predominating. This practice was commonly resorted to by omnibus-drivers and conductors, whenever they wanted to punish spies and informers. From this the expression has come to mean in a general sense to maltreat a person or to handle him roughly. The editor wrote a scathing article against the students who gave him the miller, while he was passing along the street. "To drown the miller." Explained by illustration. This

whisky is not worth drinking, you have drowned the miller, that is, you have put too much water in it.

**MILLINER.** A corruption of Milaner, an inhabitant of Milan, which used to be the leading city in fashion and originally a milliner was a man. Shakespeare in *Winter's Tale* says "No milliner can so fit his customers with gloves." Ben Jonson in *Every Man in his Humour* speaks of a "milliner's wife." Now the word is restricted to women who deal in hats, feathers &c.

**MIME.** It is a dramatic sketch, usually of humble life, and performed by one actor.

**MINCE.** "To mince matters." To gloss over them or to whitewash them so as to present them in a favourable light. Mincing matters is very common among party politicians. "To make mincemeat of." To destroy completely, to shatter. He made mincemeat of his opponent in a boxing fight in two minutes.

**MIND.** "Mind your eye." Be careful. You may leave a thing in charge of a person and say "Mind your eye, it is very precious." "Mind your own business." Attend to your own affairs and do not meddle with those of others. When two persons are discussing a subject, and a third person interferes with a remark unasked for he is told to mind his own business. "Time out of mind." Over and over again or repeatedly, literally so long past that it has faded out of memory.

**MINERVA.** Goddess of fine arts, and also of wisdom and war. The tutelary deity of Athens.

**MINIATURE.** For the origin of this word I quote the following from Don Lemon's *Everybody's Scrap Book of Curious Facts*:—"In the golden days of Roman literature, to be a successful author was to be as great as a king, for kings looked to their poets for immortality, as Augustus Caesar did to Horace. Hence it was to be expected that authors would feel their importance and display more or less vanity. One of their weaknesses was to see their portraits painted in artistic fashion in their parchment books. This work was intrusted to artists called *miniatores*, that is, artists whose work was largely done in vermilion, a colour extracted from cinnabar, and called by the Romans *minium*. Those *miniatores* chose the oval for their beautifully brilliant portraits on the parchment books, and hence the origin of the term "miniature," a small hand-painted oval or round portrait."

**MINISTRY.** The "Ministry" is, in fact, a committee of the leading members of the two Houses. It is nominated by the Crown, but it consists exclusively of statesmen whose opinions on the pressing questions of the time agree in the

main with the opinions of the majority of the House of Commons.—*Macaulay*.

**MINUS.** It means less, and is the neuter of minor, which also literally means less.

**MINUTE.** In whatever way this word is applied, it conveys the meaning of small or trifling. A minute of an hour is the one-sixtieth part of an hour and the minutes of a meeting are brief notes which can afterwards be set out at large (en-grossed). Even the adjective minute retains this sense, for to examine a thing minutely is to examine it in its every little detail. •

**MIRTH.** This word as well as its related adjective "merry" are traced to a word which means short, and hence mirth is that which shortens time or cheers.

**MISERABLE.** "To feel as miserable as a dying duck in a thunderstorm." Commonly used in England for "to feel very miserable." •

**MISERY.** Originally it meant avarice and it gives one an idea that an avaricious man is, as a rule, a miserable man. So is a miserly man.

**MISPRISION OF TREASON.** (Legal.) Concealment of an act of treason.

**MISS.** A designation for an unmarried woman, being the contraction of mistress. "A miss is as good as a mile." A failure is a failure, even if one comes very near success. It matters little whether a man misses a train by half a minute or by half an hour. "The missing link." Since Darwin propounded his theory of the origin of man, the missing link has come to mean a creature between a man and a monkey who are so closely allied, and the term is often applied to men who resemble monkeys.

**MISTLETOE.** "Kissing under the mistletoe." At Christmas time a bunch of mistletoe is hung under the ceiling and any girl passing under it can be kissed by a man without being offended. This custom prevails in Europe by way of merriment.

**MITTEN.** In common parlance it means "hand," and in a pugilistic sense, of the word it signifies fist. As verb it means to jilt, hence, the expression "to give the mitten," to dismiss as a lover. A similar expression is "to give turnips." "Easy as mittens" means free.

**MOB.** As explained by Swift in his *Art of Polite Conversation* the word "mob" was during his time a slang contraction of mobility, that is the populace, or "the great unwashed" as defined by Burke. Note the word "nob" which is an abbreviation of nobility up to the present time. Mob, however, is used as a word in itself, a contracted form of the

Latin *mobile vulgus*, the fickle crowd. Although Johnson describes it as a cant word, Swift notices it as a proper expression.

**MOBILISATION.** It is the technical term for bringing troops together to their depôts and headquarters, that is, for assembling an army. It is an essential important feature of modern military organisation on account of the enormous numbers of Reservists who have passed into civilian life and away from the immediate supervision of the military authorities. All these men have to be brought back to their respective centres, furnished with their accoutrements and kit, and allotted their stations. On the celerity and perfection with which this process is carried out, depends the readiness of an army to take the field."—A. W. Ready in *Essays and Essay Writing for Public Examinations*.

**MODUS OPERANDI.** (Latin.) The manner of proceeding. *Modus in rebus* (Latin). "A medium in all things." A *modus vivendi* (Latin). A mutual agreement under which people can live in harmony.

**MOLLY CODDLE (A).** An effeminate person; milksop (which see).

**MOMENT.** It comes from the Latin *momentum*, a movement, hence an instant of time.

**MOMENT, MINUTE.** These two are not synonymous in the strict sense. A moment is an infinitesimal part of time; a minute is the sixtieth part of an hour. One may wink in a moment, but certainly not in a minute.

**MONASTERY.** It comes from the Greek *monos* meaning alone, and a monastery is a place where monks live alone, that is, cut off from the world. Although "convent" means also a place inhabited by religious devotees, it comes from a root of an entirely different meaning. It is derived from the Latin "*coventus*" (*con*, together, and *venire*, to come), hence an assembly. "Monastery" is, therefore, the place, and convent the religious community inhabiting it.

**MONDAY.** (Anglo-Saxon *Mondanaeg*.) Day of the moon.

**MONEY.** The plural of this word is moneys, although often it is improperly spelt monies. The vowel *e* which precedes *y* in the singular does not admit the change of *y* into *ie* according to the rule of grammar.

**MONEY, WEALTH.** A person may have money without having wealth, that is, he may have sufficient to meet his daily wants. When he has money in abundance that is over and above what he needs for wants and luxuries, he has wealth and then he becomes wealthy. "Money to burn." A slang phrase signifying possession of ample

means. "Money is the golden key that can open every door." The meaning is obvious. Similar expressions are "Money makes the mare to go," "money is the game of life." "Mint of money." A large fortune. His business proved so successful that he made a mint of money out of it. •

**MONKEY.** This word is a term of contempt and displeasure, as used by printers in the abbreviated form of "monk," and it is also a term of endearment, as addressed to a child—"Well, you little monkey?" The word monkey is used in various ways, viz., common, turf, legal and nautical with various significations. The most common expression is "To have one's monkey up" that is to get angry, and this has given rise to other similar expressions such as "his monkey is up," or "he has a monkey on his back" that is he is angry. Monkey as used in these phrases means spirit, or bad temper, in allusion to the evil spirit in man. "Monkey's allowance" means more kicks than halfpence that is more blows than alms, and here "monkey" stands for halfpence. In the turf phraseology "monkey" is £500, and "the field a monkey" means that the layer is willing to bet £500 on any horse in the field. The legal phrase "Monkey with a long tail" signifies a mortgage. Nautically "monkey" denotes the vessel in which a mess receives its grog, and hence the expression "Sucking the monkey" which means drawing liquor from a cask by sucking it with a straw. A similar expression is "tapping the admiral" (which see). As verb "to monkey" means to tamper with, to fool about, as for instance "Don't monkey with a loaded gun." Americans use the abbreviated form "to monk" with the same meaning. •

**MONSOON.** This is believed to be an Arabic word, and came into English from the Dutch who borrowed it from the Portuguese.

**MONTH.** It comes from the *mona* meaning moon, and the ancients reckoned the month by the lunar revolutions. "A month of Sundays." An indefinitely long period.

**MOON.** "A moonlight flitting." Those tenants who remove household goods by night to avoid paying rent are said to make a moonlight flitting. "Moonlighter." One who in Ireland perpetrated outrages by night on tenants who incurred hostility of Land League. Irish landlords who ill-treated their tenants were set upon by a body of armed men in disguise. It was customary for the latter to send letters of warning signed "Captain Moonlighter." Hence the name. "All moonshine." When a person makes a plausible statement, hiding his real motive at the same time, such statement is called "all moonshine." He says

he is going to England for study, but I know it is all moonshine.

**MOOT POINT.** A question still open to discussion.

**MOOZY.** This slang term is applied to bad weather at sea, when rain is threatening and haze shuts out the view at distance.

**MOP.** To mop is to drink or empty a glass, hence mopsy means tipsy. This term is, however, superseded by "boozy" and "hoodman." Almost all the terms relating to drunkenness are of American origin, and there are about 350 American synonyms. "He mopped the floor with his opponent" literally means he thrashed his opponent so completely that he cleared or swept the floor with him. Compare the expression "to sweep the board" which also conveys the idea of achieving complete triumph.

**MORAL.** It comes from *mos* meaning custom.

**MORALE.** (French.) The moral principle.

**MORNING.** "The grey of the morning." The early morning.

**MORTAL.** It comes from *mar* meaning to kill, to mar.

**MOTE.** "Mote in the eye" (Biblical). This expression is used of persons who are ready to see faults in others, while they are blind to their own.

**MOTHER.** "Mother's apron strings." This phrase signifies "watchful maternal care" of a child who is too young to look after itself. "Mother-wit." Natural sagacity. "It is extempore, from my mother-wit."—*Shakespeare*. "Mother of books." Alexandria was so called because of its largest library in the world.

**MOTIVE, REASON.** A motive may be selfish or otherwise, or it may be reasonable or unreasonable, but it sets the will in motion. A reason is that which is thought or believed in support of some other thing.

**MOUNTAIN-DEW.** Scotch whisky, so called from being surreptitiously distilled among the mountains of Scotland.

**MOUTH.** "Down in the mouth." Disappointed and dejected.

**MOVE.** "To move heaven and earth." To make every possible effort, the phrase being hyperbolical.

**MR. AND MRS.** It should be observed that the correct form is to make invitations out to "Mr. and Mrs.," not "Mrs. and Mr."

**MRS.** "Mrs. Grundy." She is constantly alluded to as a standard of propriety by Mrs. Ashfield in Morton's *Speed the Plow*, published in 1800, in the phrase, "What will Mrs. Grundy say?", but never appears on the scene. Hence the expression "Mrs. Grundy" has become proverbial for good

conduct, conventional propriety and morality. "Mrs. Harris." A non-existent person, a myth, from Mrs. Gamp's fictitious patron in Charles Dickens's famous novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

**MUCH OF A MUCHNESS.** Alike; very much the same thing.

**MUD.** When this word is used as a compound, it always denotes that which has got something to do with mud. A "mud-student" is a student at the Agricultural College at Cirencester. A "mud-lark" is "a river-finder" so called from the fact of his having to plunge into mud on the shore in order to find articles such as coals, ropes, bones, &c. which drop from ships while lying or repairing along shore. A "mud-player" is a batsman who is partial to a soft wicket and usually shines on such a wicket. "Mud-plungers" are street beggars who purposely come out in wet weather with bare, muddy feet.

**MUFF.** "A soft thing that holds a lady's hands without squeezing them." As dandies at one time used to wear muffs, a "muff" came to signify a stupid, weak-minded person. According to Skeat, the great etymologist, it literally means "a mumblor," or indistinct speaker; hence, a stupid fellow, being allied to "mumble." As verb, it means to bungle, e.g. in cricket to muff a catch is to let it slip off one's hand, similar expression being "to boss the ball." In the University slang "to muff" is to fail in an examination, and in the general sense "to muff a thing" is to make a mess of it, that is, to do it like a muff.

**MUFTI.** (Anglo-Indian.) Though the word mufti is now a recognised term in the English language, it was originally an Anglo-Indian word from a Hindustani word meaning a priest or a judge. The slang phrase "to go in mufti" means to go in civilian's clothes, that is, out of uniform, *incognito*.

**MUG, JUG.** Both these words mean mouth and in Turf parlance they signify a simpleton or a person easily imposed upon. Although "a mug" and "a juggins" are used synonymously on the Turf, the difference between the two is this that while "a true mug" never emerges from his "mughood," a juggins may in time become sharp enough to take care of himself on the racecourse. Mug is now used in a general sense, and "juggins," though sometimes used similarly, has, as a rule, been confined to its original sphere. In the University slang "to mug up" is to cram for an examination and this term is very commonly in use at Oxford and Cambridge. From this we have the expression "mugger" or "mugster" for a hard-working student. The University slang originated at Winchester College which is also responsible for the use of this term in cricket. A bat well oiled and polished is said to be well mugged, and hence anything which appears pleasant to the eye is said to be mugged. In popular lan-



guage "to mug oneself" is to get drunk, and in this sense it is derived from mug, a drinking vessel. "To mug up" in the theatrical sense of the word means to paint one's face. In America roughs and thieves are called "mugs."

**MUGGY.** As applied to the weather it means foggy. It comes either from the Welsh word *mwg* meaning smoke, or *mwyl* meaning sultry.

**MUM.** Silence. "Mum is the word." Keep silent about it and don't say a word to anyone. In theatrical sense "to mum" means to act, especially applied to strolling actors.

**MUMS.** Slang for lips.

**MURDER, MANSLAUGHTER, HOMICIDE.** Sir James Fitz-James Stephen in his "Digest of the Criminal Law" says:—"Murder is unlawful homicide with malice, a forethought. Manslaughter is unlawful homicide without malice or forethought." But there may be "malice, a forethought," without any intent to kill, and that would be "murder," as, where an assault is committed with intent to do grievous bodily hurt, although with "malice, a forethought;" and death results from the injury inflicted; or, where an act of felony is intended and the death of a person results from such act. For instance, as Sir James Stephen in his book referred to above says: "If a man shoot at a domestic fowl, intending to steal it, and accidentally kills another man, he may be indicted for murder." If a person kills another in the heat of passion caused by provocation, he is charged with manslaughter. Homicide is the crime of killing a human being, no matter by what means death was effected. Homicide is no crime when it is done in self-defence against unlawful violence, or in other words, where a capital crime is endeavoured to be committed by force, that force can be lawfully repelled by the death of the person attempting the crime, for instance, the law justifies a woman killing a man who attempts to ravish her. Homicide is also justifiable when it is done in the execution of the sentence of a Court of Justice, viz., the hanging of a convicted murderer by the executioner.

**MUSEUM.** It comes from a Greek word signifying a place which is dedicated to the Muses. The British Museum in London is one of the greatest and the most extensive of its kind.

**MUSTARD.** "The mustard seed" (Biblical). In this phrase the allusion is to the parable in the Bible. A thing which in itself is of no significance and yet leads to a very significant result is called a mustard seed.

**MUTE.** "Mute as a fish." This phrase means quite silent. It is true that some fish make noises, but it should not be forgotten that these are not organic.

**MUTTON.** It is generic for the sex, as "a bit of mutton," that is, a woman. "Mutton" is also a contemptuous term for a loose woman, sometimes varied to "laced mutton." Ben Jonson in his *Masque of Neptune's Triumph* uses the expression "a fine laced-mutton or two" for two wantons, and Shakespeare also uses it in this sense. The word "mutton" also enters into many common expressions, viz. (a) "To cut one's mutton" is to dine, mutton being sheep, (b) "Dead as mutton," that is, dead as anything, (c) "Mutton-fist" is an uncomplimentary title for anyone with a large, coarse hand. Printers call an index-hand a mutton fist from the fact of its being fat and shapeless. "Muttoner" is a Winchester College term for a hard knock on the thumb from a cricket-ball. The phrase "to return to our muttons" is used by speakers and writers when they want to come or hark back to the original point after having deviated for some time.

**MUTUAL, COMMON, RECIPROCAL.** Mutual implies interchange; common belongs to more than two persons; reciprocal "supposes an alternation or succession of returns," as Crabb says. Great writers like Dickens and Scott have used the expression "mutual friend" which, strictly speaking, should be "common friend," because it takes two to make a friendship, and therefore all friends are "mutual friends." The expression "common friend," although more correct, is not much used, as the word common conveys the idea of inferiority. "By the by, ma'am, you have a lodger, I may call him our mutual friend."—Dickens. "They buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation of the enemy."—Brooks. "Such a man as Emerson belongs to no one town or province: he is the common property of mankind."—Holmes. "Love brings little happiness unless it is reciprocal."

**MY.** "My stars!" It is a trivial oath. Instead of "my stars," people sometimes humorously say "my stars and garters."

**MYSTERIES.** A slang term for sausages. Sausages are so called because nobody is supposed to know of what they are made.

**MYSTICISM.** Mysticism is a system of thought which aims at attaining to direct and immediate communion with the Creator by developing the religious instinct and feeling, and nowhere is this tendency so markedly apparent as in the various Hindu sects with whom mysticism has always been the most prominent feature.

**MYTH, MYTHOLOGY.** A myth is simply a story relating to gods and heroes, and mythology signifies the collected myths of a nation. It is also applied to the scientific study of such myths with the object of ascertaining why such myths or stories about gods and heroes were told.

## N.

**NABOB.** The correct Indian word is *Nawab* meaning a man of wealth and importance. In the time of the Mogul rule a *nawab* was a governor of a province and commander-in-chief of the Indian army. In England this term is contemptuously applied to an English merchant who returns home laden with riches and gives himself mighty airs.

**NABOTH.** "Naboth's vineyard." A neighbour's possession coveted by a rich man. The allusion is to king Ahab who had his eye on Naboth's vineyard which he eventually obtained by foul means.

**NAIL.** "On the nail." Without delay, immediately as "I'll pay your wages on the nail." "A nail in one's coffin" (slang). A humorous name for a glass of strong liquor, such as whisky or brandy.

**NAMBY-PAMBY.** Affected, finical, with no backbone in it. "Another of Addison's favourite companions was Ambrose Phillips, a good Whig and a middling poet, who had the honour of bringing into fashion a species of composition which has been called after his name, namby-pamby."—Macaulay.

**NAME.** "To take a name in vain." To use a sacred name irreverently. The Bible says "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain."

**NAP.** In the sense of a little sleep or a doze it comes from two Anglo-Saxon words meaning to nod and to bend oneself respectively, and one taking a nap is usually seen to nod and to bend. The game of nap (at cards) has no connection with this, because it is so called after Napoleon III. The expression "to go nap" means to make five tricks out of the five cards the player holds in hand on one venture. Dr. Brewer says that "to go nap" is to stake all winnings on the cards in hand; hence to risk all on one venture. I differ from Dr. Brewer, because one need not necessarily risk all his winnings when he "goes nap."

**NARCISSUS.** A kind of flower. In Greek mythology Narcissus was the most beautiful youth of his time. He happened to catch the reflection of his face in a stream and he became so enamoured of his own beauty that he fell into the stream through sheer ecstasy and changed into a flower.

**NASTY.** Nasty conveys with it the idea of filth, as a nasty pigsty. When a book is spoken of as "nasty," it means it is immoral or filthy. Ordinarily disagreeable weather should

not, strictly speaking, be described as "nasty weather," though it is done almost every day, and almost every learned Englishman uses the expression "nasty weather."

**NATION.** As an American adjective it expresses enormous, immense. "You Colony chaps are a nation sight too well off."—Sam Slick. Mr. Bartlett says that the word is a corruption of damnation. But it should be noted that it is a corruption of "damnation," when used in the slang sense of very or exceedingly. "A nation of shopkeepers." It is generally believed that Napoleon Bonaparte is responsible for this phrase which contemptuously describes the English race. This is an erroneous notion, because when Napoleon was only six years of age, Adam Smith used it in his *Wealth of Nations*.

**NATURAL.** "Natural History." In its oldest sense Natural History includes all the concrete sciences, but now it has mostly come to mean Zoology, especially with reference to the life and habits of animals. "Natural philosophy." In Great Britain and India this term is employed to designate Physics.

**NATURALISM.** Originally this term was used in reference to nature-worship, but now it has become a synonym for realism in art, literary or other. Realism in Art and Literature is a method of dealing with the facts of life and nature without idealisation and this system aims at doing away with the exaggerations of romanticism.

**NATURALIST.** Trench says "A naturalist, 200 years ago, was a decrier of revealed truth; he is now an investigator, and often a pious one, of nature and its laws; yet the word has remained true to its etymology all the while."

**NATURE.** "In a state of nature." Naked. "Nature's chief masterpiece." This flattering expression is used to describe "a man of noble parts and high integrity." It is attributed to Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, who does not use it in this sense in his *Essay on Poetry*.

**NAUGHTY.** "Naughty is a curious example of the ups and downs to which words are subject,—particularly words of approval or reproach. It is from naught, and meant originally either 'destitute,' or 'good-for-nothing.' In the latter sense it became a general synonym for 'bad.' King Lear's fool says 'This is a naughty night to swim in'; the records of Plymouth Colony speak of 'small and naughty canoes' (1661). In its application to morals, naughty was perhaps a euphemism at first, but it soon came to be a term of extreme reprobation. 'A naughty world' and 'naughty lady' in Shakespeare are exactly equivalent to 'wicked' in Modern English. Since his time the word has lost all dignity on account of its application to the peccadillos of children.

When used of older persons, it is purely sportive, and has far less force than it possessed at the very beginning of its career."—Greenough and Kittredge, *Words and their Ways in English Speech*. I have repeatedly heard this word applied to children. I have also heard actors on the stage referring to England as "naughty land," of course, in joke. It is one of those words which have become very popular in England. An English girl is fond of addressing her young man as "my naughty boy."

**NAVY.** It is a contraction of navigator and it was originally applied to those who worked in forming canals for the purpose of navigation. Now it denotes one employed as labourer in the construction of railways particularly and other heavy earthworks generally.

**NEAR.** "To be near" (colloquial.) To be stingy. Although he spends a lot of money on drink, he is rather "near."

**NEAT.** "Neat as a pin." Very neat and tidy. I was<sup>d</sup> pleased to see everything in his house as neat as a pin. "Neat as wax." The waxen cells of bees are precisely neat, and hence the expression. "Neat as a band-box." A band-box is a box for hats, caps &c. which is always neat and tidy, and hence the expression.

**NEAT.** This comes from the Latin *nitere*, to shine, and a house that looks neat always shows all the surfaces well polished and shining.

**NECK.** "Neck and crop." It means entirely, completely. Authorities differ as to the origin of the word "crop" in this phrase. Some think that "crop" is the highest part or top of a thing and some old writers have used it in that sense. Others are of opinion that "crop" is the gorge of a bird, hence "neck and crop" is really a tautology. He chucked him "neck and crop" out of window. "Neck or nothing" (racing). Desperate. "Neck and neck." Horses run neck and neck in a race when they are so perfectly equal that one cannot be said to be before the other. "Neck and heels." In a hasty manner. "When he got on the platform to deliver a speech, the audience carried him neck and heels out of the room." "A stiff neck." The Biblical phrase means obstinacy in sin. The Bible says:—"Speak not with a stiff neck." To have a stiff neck from cold is to have a neck which you cannot move without pain, and "to be a stiff neck" is to be proud and distant. "Neck verse." This represented a sentence from the Bible the repetition of which by a criminal saved him from capital punishment. (See "Benefit of Clergy.") "To break the neck of anything" (colloquially). To accomplish the stiffest part of anything. He kept on working, until he succeeded in breaking the neck of the problem which had baffled him for

some time. The expression "the neck of the winter is broken" means the worst part of the winter is over.

**NECTAR, AMBROSIA.** The old Greek poets called the drink of the gods "nectar," and ambrosia was the name they gave to the food of the gods. Since then both these terms have become symbols of perpetual youth and immortality.

**NED.** "To make one's ned out of." To make money from.  
 • Ned is slangily used for a guinea. Lots of foreigners come over to India to make money, and as soon as they have made their ned out of their trade with Indians, off they depart home and retire from life.

**NEED, NEEDS.** Need is no longer used as an adverb, and when "needs" is used as an adverb it means "necessarily" or "of necessity," as you must needs do it.

**NEEDFUL (THE).** Used as slang for ready money or cash, as the one thing most needful for this life is money.

**NEEDLE.** "To get the needle." (Slang.) To get vexed or irritated. Better leave him alone he has got the needle. "Needle in a bottle of hay." The word "bottle" here comes from the French or Anglo-Saxon *botel*, a diminutive of bottle, meaning a bunch or a bundle, and hence the phrase signifies an impossible task, because one cannot find a needle in a bundle of hay.

**NEEDS.** "Needs must when the devil drives." One must resign oneself, however reluctantly, to what is unavoidable.

**NEGLECT, NEGLIGENCE.** Neglect is the result of a temporary oversight: negligence is habitual omission of one's duties and as such is a trait of character. Fraser in his *Law of Torts* says, "negligence is the breach of a duty (a) to do something which a reasonable man, guided by those considerations which ordinarily regulate the conduct of human affairs, would do, or to abstain from doing something which a prudent and reasonable man would not do."

**NEGOTIATE.** Formerly this word was spelt negotiate.

**NEIGHBOUR.** It was originally used as a verb with the meaning of "to associate," "Though we live next door, we don't neighbour."

**NEMESIS.** Just punishment inflicted on a wrong-doer who has escaped it hitherto. Nemesis in Greek mythology was the daughter of Night and Goddess of retribution.

**NEPHEW.** It is interesting to note that this word originally meant a male grandchild and niece was a female grandchild. It comes from the Latin *nepos*. Not only in Latin but in old English it meant a grandchild. The Latin for niece is *neptis*, meaning grand-daughter. In the New Testament occurs the phrase "If any widow have children or nephews"

where nephews is used for descendants. Ben Jonson in his *Masque of Augurs* (Vol. VI. p. 135) uses "nephew" in its original sense, and so does Spenser in his *Ruins of Rome*.

**NE PLUS ULTRA.** (Latin.) Literally it means "nothing more beyond" and is synonymous with perfection. We have *ne plus ultra* cork-screws and various other things. When a student has achieved the highest distinction, we say "he has achieved the *ne plus ultra*."

**NEPOTISM.** The Popes were in the habit of bestowing unusual advantages and benefits upon their younger relatives (*nepotes*) by giving them high offices in the Church or making them valuable grants. The term is now used generally in the sense of a patronage bestowed upon one not because of one's merit but family connection.

**NEPTUNE.** God of the sea.

**NERVE.** Originally this word meant sinew (Latin *nervus*), and nervous meant vigorous as in such phrases as "he is a nervous writer" or "this writer has a nervous style." Then as physiology advanced, the word nerve came to be used in a different sense and the word nervous in ordinary use took a meaning, the very reverse of sinewy strength. "To lose one's nerve" really means to become weak and flabby by losing one's sinewy strength. The fact that a person loses his nerve shows that in the first place he is conscious of having nerves. This seems contradictory, but it is the natural result when we know the origin of the word.

**NERVE.** A slang term for impudence.

**NEST.** "A nest-egg" (colloquial). Something laid by with a view to tempt others by way of making a start. The allusion is to the real or imitation egg which is laid in a nest where hens are expected to lay in order to tempt them to lay eggs beside it. This is called the nest-egg. The books laid on a lawyer's table to tempt clients are called nest-eggs. "To feather one's nest" (colloquial). To provide oneself for the future.

**NEVER.** "Never trust me." This phrase, common among low Londoners, is used by Shakespeare in the *Twelfth Night*. It is in the nature of an oath, calling vengeance on the pledger, if the thing pledged for does not come to pass. "Well! I never did." An exclamation of astonishment, equivalent to "Well, I never heard or read anything of the kind." If a person tells you an amazing story, you suddenly exclaim "Well, I never did."

**NEW ENGLAND.** Six Eastern States of the United States of America, viz., Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut are collectively called New England.

**NEWGATE.** "To be in Newgate." To be a criminal, Newgate at one time being the great prison of London. This expression is colloquial.

**NEWS, INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION, TIDINGS.** It is believed that the word "news" is made up of the four initial letters on a weathercock, viz., North, East, West, South. But as the word was formerly spelt "newest," it does not in any way support this theory. Probably it comes from the German *das neue* in the nominative case and neuter gender. News is the most general of these four terms. Intelligence originally means choosing, thence understanding and lastly only a piece of news. Tidings is an archaic word, literally meaning that which betides. Information is the thing itself of which one is enlightened by being informed, and it is mostly an informal mode of communication.

**NEXT.** "To next door" (colloquial). Very close to. He is next door to a savage. "Next one's heart." Very dear to one. Literature is next my heart.

**NIBS.** It means self, as his nibs, said of the person referred to. Your nibs means yourself. It also means friend, or boy, and is used in addressing a person. A person in authority is sarcastically called "nibs." It is certainly not an elegant title.

**NICE.** It is derived from the Latin *nescius* meaning ignorant, and hence the word originally meant foolish. Chaucer uses it in this sense when he says:—"For he was nyce and knoweth no wisdom." It still retains its original meaning in the phrases "more nice than wise," and "to be over nice." It is also believed by some that this word comes to us from the French *niais* meaning simple. The word gradually developed and came to be used in a complimentary sense to denote the good quality of a person or an object, e.g. a nice apple or a nice fellow.

**NICELY.** This word is sometimes colloquially used for "very well," as in the sentence "he is doing nicely." But it is best not to use this word in that sense.

**NICETY.** "To a nicety." With extreme accuracy. His room was arranged to a nicety.

**NICK.** To steal. The words "he that nicks and runs away will live to nick another day" are inscribed in a prison cell. It also signifies to hit the mark, as "I've nicked it" i.e. I've won my point. "In the nick." At the right moment. I received your letter in the nick. "Old Nick" (slang). The devil.

**NICOTINE.** This word takes after the name of John Nicot, who introduced tobacco into France in 1560.

**NIFTY.** Vulgarly used for "stylish."



**NIGHT.** "A night cap" (colloquial). A warm drink taken before going to bed; a fillip.

**NIGHTINGALE.** It is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *niht* meaning night, and *galan* to sing. It is peculiar that this bird is really a morning songster and not the night songster as the derivation implies.

**NIMINY-PIMINY.** It means affected simplicity or delicacy, used contemptuously. Affectedly delicate ways are spoken of as niminy-piminy.

**NINCOMPOOP.** This word was at one time *nincumpoop*, and *nincumpoop* seems to be an arbitrary elaboration. *Nincum* is probably for *nicodemus*, which is used in French for a fool. He is a *nincumpoop* and a perfect fool.

**NINE.** "Nine days' wonder." Anything that is talked about for some time and then forgotten. There are two different origins assigned to this expression. The one refers to the nine days during which Lady Jane Grey was styled Queen of England, and the other refers to the nine days after birth during which a puppy remains blind. "Nine tailors make a man." In this phrase "nine" has no reference to the number, but it stands for a plural. A tailor to his misfortune is not believed to be as strong as an ordinary man, it requires more than one tailor to stand up against one ordinary man. Another explanation is that this phrase is a corrupted form of "nine tellers mark a man," meaning that three times three tolls or tellers are struck on the passing bell for a man. "At Wimbledon it is still the custom to strike three times three for an adult male, and three times two for a female, on the tenor bell."

**NIPPANT.** This American adjective means impertinent or impudent and there is no reason why it should not be adopted in the English language, as it has already got the verb "to nip" meaning to satirize. A satire conveys the idea of the impudence of the satirist.

**NIPPY.** As a slang word it means mean, stingy, 'curt, snappish. In ordinary language this word is used for a person who is cutting and sharp in his remarks about others. It is also used in the sense of buoyant. The *Evening News* dated the 16th March 1914, says:—"This training it is which enables him to use screw so effectively, and although he is not so nippy as a younger man, his work at the net is very effective." In this passage he refers to Mr. Balfour.

**NO.** "No go." (Slang). Of no use. These fruits are ~~no~~ go.

**NOB.** (Pugilistic). The head, as "one for his nob" meaning a blow on the head. The expression "bob a nob" means

a shilling a head. In this sense it is an entirely English word, and probably the same as knob. A person of rank or position is so called, and it is in all likelihood an abbreviation of nobleman. "To come the nob" is an Oxford University term meaning to put on airs. Nobbing is collecting money. The colloquial expression "what nobbings" means "how much money is collected from the crowd." "A nob of the first water" is an aristocrat, nob being a contraction of nobleman.

**NOBLESSE OBLIGE** (French). This phrase implies that a person in a high position is constrained to perform his duties well by a sense of his position: high rank has its obligations—Dixon—*English Idioms*.

**NOCENT**. This is the opposite of "in-nocent" and it must be observed that while the language has retained the word innocent (guiltless) it has dispensed with the word "nocent." "Nocent" is derived from the Latin *nocens*, the present participle of *noceo*, I hurt, and therefore nocent means guilty.

**NOCTURNAL, NIGHTLY**. Nocturnal is that which happens at night as "nocturnal dreams"; nightly means night by night and relates to time. A society may hold nightly meetings.

**NOCTURNE**. (Night-piece). A dreamy musical piece generally for the piano.

**NOD**. "A nod is as good as a wink." The full phrase is "a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse" which means that no signs are of any good to one who will not see. The phrase generally used is "a nod is as good as a wink" which suggests the idea of a secret understanding existing between two persons.

**NOISE**. Two derivations of this word have been suggested: the one being the Latin *nausca*, from which we have the word "nauseous," and the other being *noxia* which gives us "noxious." Anything that makes noise causes annoyance and it must be noted that the two derivations also carry with them the suggestion of annoyance, as anything "nauseous" or "noxious" is really annoying.

**NOM DE GUERRE**. (French). A name assumed for a time, properly a war name.

**NOM DE PLUME**. (French). A name assumed by a writer, properly a pen-name.

**NON**. "*Non est*." It is a contraction of *non est inventus* meaning not to be found. These words are written on a writ by the Sheriff when the defendant is not to be found in his bailiwick.

**NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, WARRANT OFFICERS.**

In the British Army, non-commissioned officers are those who are above the rank of soldiers and below that of officers, and their duty is to superintend the soldiers' mess, teach them drill and do other necessary things. They are selected from among private soldiers, and it is essential that they must be qualified by good conduct, education, temper &c. They not only get extra pay, but they have the privilege of obtaining commissions as officers. Amongst non-commissioned officers are quartermasters, riding-masters and others. Warrant officers are a class between officers and non-commissioned officers and they are selected from amongst the latter and they consist of master-gunners, conductors of supplies and schoolmasters of more than twelve years' service and others.

**NONCE.** This word is only used in the phrase "for the nonce" meaning for the time being. Then in the word nonce really belongs to the preceding word, and therefore the phrase as it originally stood was "for then once." Chaucer uses the phrase "for the nonce" in his *Canterbury Tales*.

**NONCONFORMISTS.** This term historically is applied to the clergy who were ejected from their livings by the Act of Uniformity to the conditions of which they would not submit. This Act was passed in 1662. Now the term is generally applied to those who refuse to conform to the doctrines and practices of the Established Church.

**NONCUPATIVE WILL.** A will made by word of mouth before two witnesses, and afterwards reduced to writing. This kind of will is allowed only in the case of soldiers and sailors of His Majesty the King when engaged against an enemy.

**NONPLUS (NO MORE).** This expression is used when a person cannot meet his opponent's arguments and then he is said to have come to a nonplus. It is used as a verb also in such phrases as "He is nonplussed" meaning he is in a fix.

**NONSUIT.** This term is used in English law for the abandonment of his action by the plaintiff at the hearing in Court, when he finds that he will lose his case for some reason or other. If no case be shown, the judge may direct a nonsuit. But nowadays there is practically no difference between the effect of a non-suit and that of a verdict for the defendant.

**NOSE.** In the thieves' parlance "a nose" is a detective from the idea of his being on the scent like a bloodhound, and "to nose" is to inform against. The pugilistic "noser" or "nosender" means a hard blow on the nose. The word nose as a verb is used in connection with a good many expressions in which it conveys the idea of saying or doing anything which benefits one party and injures the other, e.g. (a) "to

put one's nose out of joint," to mortify a person by excelling him, (b) "To wipe one's nose," to affront him, (c) "To lead another by the nose," to govern him by domineering over him, (d) "To pay through the nose," to pay extravagantly and (e) "To turn up one's nose," to show disdain. The expression "as plain as the nose on one's face" means so clear as to admit of no argument, hence, beyond argument. "With one's nose at the grindstone," hard at work. This colloquial expression is generally used of mechanical or uninteresting work, such as that of the clerks.

**NOT.** "Not half bad." A colloquial expression, signifying approval. My friend suggested a trip to Brighton, and I said "not half bad," *i.e.* good idea, "we will go." It is equivalent to "not a bad idea at all." "Not much of a shower" (American). This phrase is used when a political opponent or any other person makes light of his defeat. The story runs that while Noah was building his Ark, a certain man used to call on him daily and chaff him for his hobby of constructing such a boat. But when the rain commenced to fall, and the scoffer found his chin almost on a level with the water, he entreated Noah to take him on his boat, which entreaty Noah did not heed. Thereupon the man turned his back and exclaimed indignantly "Go to thunder with your old ark. I don't believe there's going to be much of a shower." "Not on your life." Vulgarly used for "not by any means."

**NOTABLE.** A notable event is one which is deserving of being noted; a prudent and careful housewife is spoken of as a notable woman.

**NOTE.** "A note of hand." A promissory note.

**NOTORIOUS, NOTED.** Notorious is generally used in an unfavourable sense as opposed to famous, as a notorious thief; noted is used in a favourable sense, as a noted man.

**NOURISH, NURTURE.** These two verbs are not synonymous. To nourish is to supply the physical necessities of the body, whereas to nurture is to extend one's care to the supply of all physical and mental necessities. For instance, the breast of a mother nourishes the infant, and the fostering care and attention of the mother nurtures it. The words nutritious and nutritive are used interchangeably with the meaning of nourishing. But the word nutritive is of more technical significance than the word nutritious. Nutriment and nutritious should not be confused with each other. Nutriment is the food itself, and nutrition is the process by which various food stuffs are assimilated by the body.

**NOVEMBER.** (*Novem*, or *g*). Ninth month of the old Roman calendar.

**NOWHERE.** "To be nowhere." In the Turf phraseology a horse not placed in a race, that is, a horse which is not

amongst the first three, is said to be nowhere. Hence, figuratively, it has come to mean comparatively inferior or insignificant for the time being. The idea of temporary inferiority arises from the fact that a horse may be nowhere to-day in a race, and may win a race straight off the following day. To be nowhere in an argument is to be completely beaten in an argument.

**NUDUM PACTUM.** (Legal.) This Latin phrase literally means a bare agreement. It is an agreement made without consideration, and therefore not enforceable in law unless it be made by deed, as a deed imports a consideration.

**NUGGET.** Formerly it was "niggot" and it means a lump, especially one of the larger lumps of native gold found in the diggings. There is a monthly paper called *Nuggets*, and it provides its readers with information about various things, carefully "dug out."

**NULLAH.** An Indian word meaning a watercourse.

**NUMBER.** "Number one." A person's self. "Never talk of number one" means never talk about yourself.

**NUMISMATICS.** It comes from the Greek *nomos*, law (a legally current coin), and numismatics is the science of coins. This science is of the utmost value both from the historical and the artistic point of view. Historically this science furnishes us with the means of ascertaining the names of obscure cities and peoples and the chronological succession of their kings in cases where no authentic documents are left behind or could be traced. Artistically these coins record the successive phases of art representing the various stages of its development. This term, as defined by dictionaries, embraces the study not only of the current coins of all nations, but of medals as well. Medals, in my opinion, should not come within this definition so far as the etymology of the word is concerned, as they do not form the current coin of a country. But as medals play as important a part in ascertaining the dates and names of countries and kings, where no authentic documents can be traced, as current coins do, the lexicographers have included medals in the study of this science. And it is, I believe, owing to this fact that in its wider sense (though inaccurate) the term includes the science of coins and medals.

**NUNCHEON.** A luncheon. It literally means a "noon drink," Anglo-Saxon *non* meaning noon, and *scencan* meaning to pour out drink. "It may here be observed that nuncheon is quite distinct from luncheon (which see).

**NUNKY.** "Nunky pays" (American). "Nunky" stands for "Uncle," short for "Uncle Sam." The letters U.S. stamped on United States Government property were read "Uncle

Sam" in joke. Hence the expression means the Government pays for everything.

**NURSE (TO).** Originally a billiards term in the sense of keeping the three balls close in play so as to score cautions in succession. In the legal sense "to nurse a property" is to make an illegal use of it, just as a trustee might nurse a property. "To nurse an old grievance" is to brood over it by cherishing it in one's memory, and this more often than not leads one to seek for revenge. Recently this term has curiously come to be applied to competition in omnibuses. "To nurse a bus" is to cheat it *i.e.* to rob it of its passengers, and this is done by placing one bus before it and the other behind it. This, of course, leaves very little chance for the "nursed" (cheated) bus which is in the middle, unless it is a favourite with the public.

**NURSE, SISTER.** A nurse is generally a qualified woman who attends on patients in hospitals as well as in private houses. Not more than half a century ago there was no such person as a well-qualified and trained nurse, and it was Miss Nightingale who first drew the attention of the public to this great need and it was in recognition of her splendid services in this humane cause that the first training school for nurses was founded in London in connection with St. Thomas's Hospital in 1860. A sister is, as a rule, a head-nurse and she is raised to that position after some years' service as a nurse. Her Majesty's Nursing Sisters are the Army and Navy nurses who must be ladies of good social position and who require to be trained for three years in a general hospital. As a reward for special service in a war they receive the Order of The Royal Red Cross, and those who receive such rewards are called Red Cross Nurses. On the Continent of Europe male-nurses are employed to attend male-patients.

**NUT.** It means the head. "To be off one's nut" is to be crazy. Chaucer uses the expression not-hed with the meaning of a head like a nut, in *Canterbury Tales*. "Nuts on." To be nuts on a person or a thing is to be fond of, or partial to either. A self-complaisant man is said to be nuts on himself. "To be nutted" is to be deceived by a person who professes to be nuts on you. "That is nuts to one" means that is a thing one is partial to. In this phrase "nut" conveys the idea of a dainty morsel, from nut, a sweet-bread.

**NUTTY.** Slangily used for amorous, or enthusiastic (upon). This vulgar word is also used in the sense of lacking in intelligence.

## O.

- O. OH!** The former expresses exclamation or direct address; the latter is an exclamation of pleasant or unpleasant emotion.
- O.K.** There are different stories as to the origin of the use of "O.K." in the sense of signifying "all right." One authority credits it to an illiterate justice of the peace, who thus endorsed the papers submitted to him. Another explanation credits the origin to John Jacob Astor, who was a man of little learning. If a note of inquiry as to any particular trader's business standing came, and his decision was satisfactory, he was accustomed to endorse the paper "O.K.," which he supposed to be the initials of "all correct."—*Pearson's Weekly*. A matter to be O.K. (oll Korrekt *i.e.* all correct) must be on the "square," and all things done in order.
- OAK.** (University.) The college rooms of an undergraduate are closed by double doors, and the outer door is called "oak." When he shuts his outer door he is said "to sport his oak" meaning "not at home" to visitors.
- OAR.** "To shove in an oar." To express an opinion uncalled for.
- OAT.** "I never got an oat of it." I never got an atom of it. The reference is to the idea conveyed by the small size of an oat.
- OATS.** (American.) To feel his oats. To feel very lively. A horse well-fed and in good condition always feels his oats.
- OBITER DICTUM.** This Latin phrase literally means a thing said by the way. In law it is an expression of opinion by a judge not relevant to the issue at a trial, and therefore not a legal decision.
- OBLIGE.** It comes from the Latin *obligare*, *ob*, before, and *ligare*, to bind, and the verb conveys the idea of binding. The legal term obligation is a bond—something that binds a person—and at one time it was the custom actually to bind a hostage, with the object of making those "bound" to keep their agreement.
- OBNOXIOUS.** An obnoxious person properly is one who is liable to punishment for any wrong that he commits, and as we naturally wish to punish those who wrong us, the word "obnoxious" came to mean offensive. South uses it in its original sense.
- OBSCURANTISTS.** It literally means lovers of darkness, and the term is applied to those who defend superstitious notions of religion against scientific truth.

**OBSERVATION, OBSERVANCE.** The latter should be distinguished from the former, although they both imply the act of observing. The idea common to these two words is the idea of attending. In observation we observe or take careful notice of a thing for the purpose of storing up knowledge in the mind; while in observance we observe a law, either sacred or civic, for the purpose of obeying it. Observance implies the sense of holding sacred.

**OBSERVATION, REMARK.** These two words are almost synonymous, though to use observation instead of remark is a bit old-fashioned. A remark is not so studied as an observation. "The observed of all observers." This quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* means the centre of attraction. Ophelia thus speaks of Hamlet.

**OCCUPANCY, OCCUPATION.** There is a slight difference in the meaning of the two words. Occupancy refers to the state of holding or possessing; occupation refers to the act of taking possession of and carries with it an idea of the rights of such occupancy.

**OCCUR, TAKE PLACE.** Strictly speaking, these are not synonyms. An occurrence is that which meets one in daily life, and is due to chance or accident, but "taking place" is brought about by arrangement.

**OCTAVE, OCTAVO.** An octave in poetry is a stanza of eight line; octavo refers to the size of a book or page given by folding sheets three times or into eight leaves.

**OCTOBER.** (*Octo*, or 8.) October was the eighth month in the old Roman calendar.

**OCULIST, OPTICIAN, OPHTHALMOLOGIST.** Oculist comes from the Latin *oculus*, the eye, and hence an oculist is one who is skilled in diseases of the eye, *i.e.*, an eye specialist. Optician comes from the French *optique*, relating to the sight, and hence, an optician is one who is skilled in the science of optics (that branch of physical science which treats of the nature and properties of light and vision). In practice as an optician helps the sight by means of glasses, the term has come to mean one who makes or sells optic glasses and instruments. Ophthalmologist comes from the Greek *ophthalmos*, eye, and *logos*, science, and ophthalmologist is one who is skilled in the physiology and pathology of the eye. This term is synonymous with oculist.

**ODD.** In the Anglo-Saxon the word signifies a point and this sense is retained even in the phrase "they are at odds (enmity) with each other": for, figuratively it means that those who are at enmity with each other are "bristling all over with points." From time immemorial the odd numbers have always been regarded as lucky and in China they believe that "the Gods delight in odd numbers."



**ODD'S** or **OD'S**. An old-fashioned oath which is a perversion of "God's." "Odd's bodikins" means "God's body" and the favourite exclamation of Charles II. was "God's fish!" meaning God's flesh. We also have "Od-zounds" meaning God's wounds, and other similar exclamations.

**ODDS**. This is a phrase used in the sense of "consequence." "What's the odds" is equivalent to what is the expected result; and "it is no odds" means it is of no consequence. In the Turf phrasology, "odds" represents the proportions or differences of a bet according to the book made by the bookmaker. When a bookmaker offers eight or even ten to one against a horse, he is said to give "long odds" on a horse to a backer. The phrase "odds and ends" which means remnants, stray articles, is perhaps the alteration of the earlier form "odd ends" and "odds" in this case is the plural of "odd" used as noun. "At odds." It has two meanings (a) opposed to, as, "these two things are at odds with each other" and (b) at a disadvantage, as "he was fighting with him at odds."

**ODE**. This is a form of lyrical poetry carried to its transcendent height by Pindar, the supreme master of the ode. The Greek ode was a poem which was sung to an instrumental accompaniment. There are no fast and hard rules binding on this form of verse, and an ode may be irregular in its structure, such irregularity being permissible in the moments of poetic exaltation. Many English poets have imitated this alluring form of verse with marked success, notable amongst whom are Spenser with his *Epithalamium* (Marriage ode), Milton with his "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Wordsworth with his "Intimations of Immortality from Recollection of Early Childhood," Shelley with his "Skylark," Keats with his "Ode to a Nightingale," and Swinburne with his "To Victor Hugo in Exile."

**ODOUR**. "Odour of sanctity." The expression "he died in the odour of sanctity" figuratively means that he died having a saintly reputation. The reference is to the old belief that the corpse of a saintly person emitted pleasant and sweet odour.

**OFF**. When this word is employed to denote softness or craziness, it is always followed by nouns which are more or less synonyms for the head, *e.g.* "off his base," "off his cocoa-nut," "off his nut," "off his onion," "off his dot," "off the spot." The last phrase is taken from the game of billiards in which the spot stroke is the most paying one, and, hence, "off the spot" literally means out of form, and thence, silly or imbecile. "Be off with you." Get away; go away. It is a peremptory order to leave. "Off hand." This phrase means impromptu as opposed to the phrase "in hand" which means in preparation. "Off colour."

Same as "out of sorts," meaning not feeling one's usual self. A horse out of form is said to be "off colour."

**OFFAL.** The refuse of the butcher's stall is so called, but formerly offal signified refuse of any kind in a much wider sense. Offal literally is that which, as refuse, is caused to fall off.

**OFFICIAL.** This word is sometimes incorrectly used for officer. An official is one who holds public office and is a subordinate officer. An officer holds an office by election or appointment, especially a civil office. "Official Bureau." Bureau is a French word meaning the whole staff of officials attached to the department. The expression "Official Bureau" conveys the idea of excessive interference on the part of the State and State officials with the details of civil government, which is so characteristic of Continental government. The word bureaucracy means that system of government in which the business is carried on in bureau (department). As a term of reproach, bureaucracy means "red-tapeism" a term so familiar to readers of Charles Dickens's novels.

**OGRE.** A fairy-tale giant who was so malignant as to live upon human flesh. Some believe that the word comes from the Ogurs, a savage tribe of Asia who were a terror to part of Europe in the fifth century. Others ascribe it to Orcus, the god of the infernal regions. It is applied to an evil-looking person of a malignant disposition, something in the nature of a fiend.

**OH, DEAR!** It is equivalent to *O dio mio* (oh, my God!).

**OLD.** This word is associated with various phrases with various significations. It is used as a general term, denoting cordiality or endearment e.g. "old fellow," "old chap," "old man," "old hoss," "old dear," "old boy," "old cock," and so on. It is also used in a disparaging sense e.g. "old Harry," "old Gentleman," "old Nick," "old Scratch," "old Toast," "old Gooseberry," which all mean the Devil. It also implies craftiness or experience, as "he is an old hand at it," Butler uses the expression "old dog" with the meaning of an experienced person in his *Hudibras*. The Irish proverb "old dog for hard road" signifies that it requires an experienced person to undertake to do anything that is difficult. "An old maid." An unmarried woman is so called, especially when she is past the marriageable age. "Old as the hills." Similar expressions are "old as history" "old as the world." "Old whale." A term for a sailor. "Old iron" (nautical). When a sailor says that he is going to work up his old iron he means that he is going ashore. Literally it means clothes worn when on shore. "Old crow" (American). A drink. Life seems to soften when I try a good old crow. "Old hoss" (American). Also

used in England. A term of endearment, equivalent to 'old cock.' "Old pelt." Old and worn out pressmen. At one time printers used to distribute the ink in old ink pelts. "Old shoe." Good luck. Probable allusion to the custom of throwing shoes at a newly married couple. "Old six." Old ale at sixpence a quart. "Old stager." One well versed in things. "Old Tom." Gin. "Old 'uns." Horses more than three years old are so called. It is a Turf term. "Old lady of Threadneedle Street." The Bank of England in the Threadneedle Street in London is so called colloquially.

**OLIGARCHY.** It comes from *oligos*, "few," and *archo*, "I govern," and originally the Greek political writers applied it to the ruling party in the aristocracy which aimed at the extension of its power and privileges. Oligarchy is to aristocracy what despotism is to monarchy.

**OLIVE BRANCH.** An emblem of peace, prosperity and victory, and it goes as far back as the time of the Flood. The Bible tells us that when the dove returned to the Ark with an olive leaf, "Noah knew that the waters were abated." Children of a parent are called 'olive branches' and this also occurs in the Prayer-Book version.

**OMEN, AUGURY, DIVINATION.** Omen comes from a root *audio*, I hear, and originally it was *osmen*. This name was given by the Romans to signs which were supposed to indicate approaching good or bad fortune, and the word was particularly applied to such signs as were received by the ear and by word of mouth. Omen should not be confused with prodigy which too was a term used in the same sense as an Omen, with this difference that prodigy was applied to phenomena and occurrences, such as monstrous births, the striking of a foot against a stone, &c. The belief in omens which existed among the Romans has been common more or less to all ages and countries, side by side with the belief that the approaching evil could be averted by sacrifices or by the recitation of sacred formulas. Augury comes from *avis*, meaning a bird, and a root allied to Sanskrit root *gar*, meaning to call, and hence it means divination by flight of birds, that is, observation and interpretation of omens by flight of birds. Amongst the Romans there were "augurs" whose office was to interpret the omens which they observed. Divination is an insight into the unknown or future by supernatural means. It is a general term including both artificial divination by astrology, lots, observation of the flight, &c., and natural divination through prophetic oracles and dreams. Among the Romans there was no such thing as natural divination, and, it was with them a kind of political institution only, the object of which was to consult the oracles as to the undertaking or otherwise of the design which they wanted to set on foot.

ON. "To be on." In the public-house parlance it means to be light or tipsy or drunk. It also means to make a bet, and the person accepting it says "I am on." "On the loose, on the spree." The former as a rule is applied to women of immoral character who are on the streets, while the latter is generally applied to men carousing. "On the loose" is also used in the sense of free or at full liberty. "On the spree" at one time had as strong an application with reference to men as "on the loose," but now it merely means an outing for the day. An innocent girl may be out "on a spree," and an immoral man may be "on the loose." "On the tiles." Out all night carousing. The allusion is to the London cats who go on their amatory excursions at night. "On toast" (American). Anything nicely served, hence, said of a man who is at another's mercy. The metaphor is probably taken from serving up small birds such as quail, larks, on toast, "trussed and spitted." Hence to have a person on toast, is literally to have him trussed and spitted at one's mercy. When you make a person look ridiculous by making all sorts of jokes at him and thus serve him out for your own object, you have him on toast, or on a bit of toast, as is sometimes said "On the nose." On the watch or look-out. "On tick." This expression was in use ever two hundred years ago. "Tick" is an abbreviation of "ticket" and to buy goods "on ticket" is to have them set down on a bill or ticket, and hence, "on credit." This expression is in common use in England. "On a string." To put a man on a string is to send him on a fool's errand or to humbug him. It is an American expression. "On hand." In England this is mostly used as a commercial term meaning "in stock." When a bookseller does not happen to have the book asked for, he says that he has no such book "on hand." In America they used the phrase in a wider sense, for instance, they say that fifty people at a meeting were on hand meaning fifty were present. "On the nail." "To pay on the nail" meant to pay at once. On the Bristol Exchange are four bronze pillars having expanded tops like tables, they are called nails. On these 'nails' the earnest money of bargains was formerly paid by merchants at the time the bargain was made. Hence to pay on the nail became synonymous with paying ready money."—Eliezer Edwards, *Words, Facts and Phrases*. "On his uppers." (Tailors.) One in great want of money. "On the batter." A revel in debauchery and riotous living. Literally it means "on the streets." Origin Anglo-Irish, signifying on the road, on the street. The Irish word *bothar* means a road. "On the fly." Making one's living out of thieving and other foul practices. It also means out drinking. "On the nod." Trying to scrape acquaintance by nodding imprudently. "On the strict Q.T." On the quiet. It is a familiar expression with servant girls who flirt

with policemen on the quiet It is also used in a general way.

**ONCE.** Once in a way. Colloquially used for "now and then" or "occasionally."

**ONE.** "One-horse." A slang term, meaning second rate as applied to inferior things. "One two." (Pugilistic.) Two blows rapidly put in after each other in boxing. The great boxer Jem Belcher was distinguished for his one two. I have often heard Englishmen using the expression "I will give you one two," with the meaning of "I will teach you a good lesson." "One butcher does not fear many sheep." The soldiers of Alexander the Great were dismayed at the overwhelming odds of their Persian enemy and when they mentioned it to him, Alexander the Great silenced them with the retort "One butcher does not fear many sheep" *i.e.* one brave man is not afraid of facing a number of chicken-hearted fellows.

**ONER.** (Or One-er.) This is an emphatic rendering of the word "one," and it is said of a person of great parts or of a thing of great excellence, as of an exceedingly pretty woman, a colossal lie, a crushing blow (a teller), or a very successful play. Dickens in one of his novels says "Her missus is a one-er at cards." In cricket a hit which yields one run is called a oner, just as a "fourer" is a boundary hit for four.

**ONUS PROBENDI.** It is a legal term meaning "the burden of proof." The *onus probendi*, in law, as a rule, lies on one who has to prove what he asserts.

**OOF.** The most recent slang for money. This phrase is coined by the *Sporting Times*. "Oof bird" means the source from which the money comes. It is also applied to a rich person.

**OPEN.** The verb "to open" comes from an older verb "to up" and this tells us that at one time to open the doors was to "up" them, as they were merely skins. We still use "up" with "open" in such phrases as "a railway opening up" a country, and a discussion "opening up" a matter. "Open question." A statement or fact which leaves itself open to be discussed according to the views of each person who discusses it. Whether Homer wrote *Iliad* is an open question, meaning that Homer's authorship is doubted and therefore, open to various discussions. "Open secret." A fact known to the public, but yet not formally announced. "Open Sesame." In the *Arabian Nights* entertainments in the story of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, when Ali Baba spoke the words "Open Sesame," the door of the robbers' cave opened. Hence "Open Sesame" is a phrase which causes doors to open. "To open the ball." It means to lead off the first dance at a ball and hence it is employed

in the sense of beginning a thing in the carrying out of which others afterwards assist. "To open the occurrence" (Police). To make an entry of a new case in the books at the police station. This is a slang expression. "Open up." This phrase is properly used in the sense of "explore" or discover, as "to open up a new country." In the phrase "to open up a subject" up is quite superfluous, and "to open a subject" meaning to introduce a subject, is just as good, if not better. "Open-door policy." Policy that secures access to a country for commercial and other similar purposes. This term came into use in 1898, when it was applied to Great Britain's desire to keep Chinese ports open to the commerce of the world.

**OPERA.** An opera is a drama which is sung throughout, accompanied with a full orchestra.

**OPINION, IMPRESSION, IDEA.** An opinion may not be based on positive knowledge, but it certainly implies a judgment formed with confidence, and is, therefore, stronger than impression which may make an effect without drawing forth a definite conclusion. An idea is purely and simply a conception formed in the mind.

**OPPORTUNE.** This comes from the Latin *ob*, before, and *portus*, the harbour, and this derivation brings before our mind a merchant vessel that has safely arrived in port laden with riches.

**OPPORTUNISTS.** In French politics, this term is applied to those who accommodate themselves to the existing circumstances and aim at such measures as can be obviously carried through. They are opposed to Extremists. The term is now generally applied to a political time-server.

**OPPOSITION.** In politics "the Opposition" is the party not in office.

**OPTICAL ILLUSION.** If the angle formed by the rays of an object seen is a large one, the object appears large; if small, the object appears small. This is optical illusion.

**OPTIMISM.** It comes from the Latin *optimus*, "best," and it is the doctrine which assumes that the existing order of things, as a whole, is the best and most perfect that could have been created, whatever may be its seeming imperfections.

**OPTIMIST.** An optimist is one who always hopes for the best and believes that the ultimate result of everything will be for the best and for the benefit of mankind.

**OR.** "Or out goes the gas." This is used as a threat to put an end to whatever is going on. When a father wants to put an end to his daughter's flirting with her *fiancé* for the

evening, he may say "Now, little one, look sharp, and say good-bye to him, or out goes the gas."

**ORACLE.** The Romans used to consult their deities on several matters by inquiring and worshipping, and an oracle was the response given by the deities. The term was also applied to the place where such response was given.

**ORAL, VERBAL.** Oral relates to that which is spoken by the mouth; verbal relates to words and therefore denotes that which is reduced to words.

**ORANGE.** This is from the Arabic *narandj* which is in Hindustani language *narangee*.

**ORANGEMEN.** A society of Protestants pledged to defend the Protestant religion of the British throne in the church against Roman Catholics. When William of Orange came to the throne in 1688, this society had its origin.

**ORATE.** It is better to avoid the use of this word in the ordinary sense of "speak" or "declaim," unless it is employed to signify "to play the orator," or "to speak in long periods."

**ORATOR.** Originally this word was used in the sense of "one who prays for," and the bishops and the clergy, two centuries ago, used to subscribe themselves at the end of their letters as "your faithful servant and orator."

**ORATORIO.** A sacred drama in which only the music and the voices of the opera are heard and no acting or scenery seen. It was first performed in the Oratory of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and hence the name.

**ORATORY, ELOCUTION.** Oratory refers to speech, being the production of an orator; elocution is a set of rules for learning how to speak eloquently. Elocution is essential for a good dramatic actor.

**ORCHESTRA.** We know that music and dancing invariably go hand in hand, but it is curious to note that Orchestra originally signified the place where the chorus danced, whereas now it is applied to the musicians who play or to the part of the house in which they sit and play. It comes from the Greek *orcheisthai*, meaning dance.

**ORDER.** "A large order." Something too much or excessive.

**ORDERS.** (Theatrical.) Free admissions. The system of injudiciously giving "orders," i.e. inviting people to theatres free of charge has oftentimes been the cause of ruining many playhouses, but many a manager has turned failures into successes by using his discrimination in "papering the house." (Which see.)

**ORDINANCE, ORDNANCE.** Ordinance is a regulation ordained by one in authority; ordnance means artillery, such as guns &c.

**ORDNANCE SURVEY.** By this term is understood the various operations undertaken by the British Government for preparing maps and plans of the whole kingdom and its parts, the term "ordnance" being applied from the fact that during its earlier days the survey was carried out under the direction of the Master-General of the Ordnance.—*Chambers's Encyclopædia*, Vol. VII.

**ORGAN, ORGANISM, ORGANIC.** All these three words come from the same Greek word *organon*, an instrument, and this signification is still retained in the instrument known as organ. But the word is also used in a technical sense with reference to animal and plant life, and means a portion of the body that has to carry on a special function, and has in consequence of that special function a special form and structure given to it in adaptation of the performance of that function. An organism is a body consisting of a number of organs each having a special function and each acting in co-ordination with the rest to carry on all the processes of life. The word organism is also used in the general sense of a body exhibiting organisation in such phrases as social organism, &c. Organic—this adjective—was originally applied to the internal activity and the product of that activity of an organism; because it was believed that "certain chemical compounds which were produced as the results of vital processes occurring within the tissues of animal and vegetable organisms could not be obtained by the ordinary method of chemical laboratory." But by the discovery of Wohler in 1828 that some of these chemical compounds could be obtained by artificial means, the term organic has lost its original restricted signification, and now this word is used in such phrases as "organic chemistry" (that which deals with organised bodies, *e.g.* animals and plants); organic disease (a disease in which the structure of an organ is morbidly altered); organic law (law which directly concerns the fundamental parts of the constitution of a State); organic remains (those organised bodies, *e.g.* animals and plants, found in a fossil state, as bones of prehistoric man, or fossil trees) &c.

**ORGIES.** Amongst the Romans and the Greeks orgies were secret rites by which they worshipped their various gods, especially the god Bacchus, and these festivals were usually accompanied with wild dancing, drinking and singing. From this accident the sense of drunkenness and debauchery came to be implied in the word.

**ORIENT.** There was once a beautiful use of "orient" as clear, bright, shining, which has now wholly departed from it. So entirely was all notion of "eastern" sometimes dropped from the word, that in Milton's sublime ode on the nativity, the setting sun is said to "pillow his chin upon an orient



wave." In like manner "orient," as so often applied to the pearl by earlier poets, does not in this connection mean "oriental," but pellucid, white, shining. It is not of course denied that the meaning here claimed for "orient" accrued to it originally from the greater clearness and lightness of the east, as the quarter whence the day broke.—Dean Trench—*Select Glossary*.

**ORNERY.** The barbarous use of this word for ordinary cannot be too strongly condemned. Very likely it is used by those who cannot pronounce the full word "ordinary."

**ORRERY.** A kind of machine so constructed as to have many complicated movements which represent the motions of the heavenly bodies. It was made by Rowley in 1750 at the expense of Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery, after whom it is named.

**ORTHODOXY.** "I have heard frequent use," said the late Lord Sandwich, in a debate on the Test Laws, "of the word orthodoxy and heterodoxy, but I confess myself at a loss to know precisely what they mean." "Orthodoxy, my Lord," said Bishop Warburton, "orthodoxy is my doxy; heterodoxy is another man's doxy."—Priestley's *Memoirs*.

**OSTRACISM.** In ancient Athens when a person of a superior rank became so powerful and influential as to endanger the democratic constitution of the State, he was ostracised, that is, banished, usually for a term of ten years. The name of the citizen thus banished was written on the ostrakon meaning the shell, and hence the term.

**OTHER FROM.** This should really be "other than," because other conveys the idea of a comparative degree.

**OTTOMAN EMPIRE.** The Turkish Empire is so called after Othman (or Osman) who first founded it. He was renowned for his great conquests and for his noble qualities of heart and mind. The Turks are also called Osmans after his name.

**OTTOMY.** It is a vulgar pronunciation of "anatomy" and means a thin man, a skeleton. Shakespeare uses "atomy" with the meaning of "ottomy."

**OUGHT.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *ahte*, the past tense of *agan*, meaning to owe, and therefore, what one ought to do is what one "owes" to do.

**OUT.** "Out of twig." This can be applied to persons and things. To put oneself out of twig is to disguise oneself in such a manner as to evade recognition, and to put a stolen jacket out of twig is to put it out of its original shape, by altering it so that it cannot be identified. "Out of sorts." Printers use this term, when any letter runs "short," and hence, figuratively it means melancholy or slightly indisposed. "To live out." To live away from home, usually

said of servants who live in the houses where they work. "Out of countenance." Confounded. "Out of frame." Out of order. "Out (or down) at heel (or at elbows)." Shabbily dressed. "Gentlemen of the three outs." (a) Without money, without wit, and without manners (Grose); (b) out of pocket, out of elbows, and out of credit (Lytton). "Out and out." Thorough, beyond measure, true. It is also as an adverb with the meaning of completely. Charles Dickens in his novel *Oliver Twist* uses this expression with the sense of "quite a man," "just like a man," "Oh, no! He is an out-and-out Christian." Lala Sundar Dass of Kapurthala, the well known tennis player, beat all his competitors out and out. "An out-and-outer." This slang expression means one whose capacity is pre-eminently excellent. "The commander of the army proved himself to be an out-and-outer." "To out-Herod Herod." To beat even Herod in brutality or extravagant language. The allusion is to Herod in the old miracle plays who was a typical tyrant of a king both in speech and action. "Out of collar." A servant's slang for "without a place." This waiter has been out of collar for a long time. "To be out with anyone." To have a disagreement with anyone. If you are out with me, I shall not visit you. "To have it out with anyone." To have an altercation with anyone upon a subject with a view to demand satisfactory explanation. The idea is that of letting loose pent-up feelings of displeasure.

**OUTCROP.** In geology, this term is applied to an emergence of stratum, as it crops out at the surface.

**OUTFIT.** A whole party is spoken of as "the whole outfit." It is an American term. It also refers to a company, or a caravan or a trading expedition.

**OUTSIDER.** (Turf.) This word is always in use at the race meeting, and is applied to a horse which is noted in the betting, "outside" the circle of favourites. There is also a human species of this term, viz., "any person whose liabilities to the bookmakers cause the inside of the ring to be too hot for him, and who if he goes racing at all is obliged to remain 'outside' the sanctuaries of the solvent."

**OVATION.** Among the Romans a kind of triumph granted to military leaders was called an ovation. It is probably derived from *ovare*, which means to cry O! or from *ovis* meaning a sheep, the custom being to sacrifice a sheep on such occasions.

**OVER.** "To come over one." To try to intimidate or compel one. The expression "he came it rather strong over me" means he tried to intimidate or compel me, though it also implies that the flattery he employed for that purpose was too excessive to be genuine. "Over at the knees." Weak in the knees, generally said of a horse.

**OVERCOME, SUBDUE, VANQUISH, CONQUER.** Overcome is a compound of over and come, signifying to get the mastery over one, which is limited only to the present time. Subdue comes from the Latin *subdo*, signifying to put under, and conveys a higher degree of permanence than "conquer" does. Vanquish is only used in connection with persons, whereas the other three terms can be applied either to persons or things. Conquer is a compound of *con* and *quero*, coming as it does from the Latin *conquero*, signifying to try to gain an object, and it always implies permanency.

**OVERFLOWED.** A river may be said to be "overflowed," not "overflown," the verb being to "overflow." "Flowed" is the past participle of "flow," and "flown" is that of the verb "to fly." The original meaning of the word flown for flooded has become obsolete.

**OVERTURE.** The French word is *ouverture*. Originally overture was the name given to an instrumental prelude to an opera, and it was Jully who first gave this prelude a definite form. Modern overtures have been too complicated to be classified.

**OWL.** A prostitute is called an "owl" because of her nightly excursions, and a person who is much out at night also earns that title. As verb it means (a) to sit up at night and (b) to smuggle by carrying on a smuggling trade at night. "To take the owl" is to get angry, and "to live too near a wood to be frightened by an owl" means not easy to alarm. "To take owls to Athens" is the same as "to carry coals to Newcastle," as owls abounded in Athens. The American expression "drunk as a biled owl" is a very favourite simile for intoxication.

**OXEN.** This is one of those few words which have retained the Anglo-Saxon plural suffix "en" (or "on"). So renowned is this animal "ox" in its antiquity that it is known by the same name throughout the whole range of Indo-European languages.

**OYES.** A law term and a corruption of the French *oyez*, hear ye. This cry is given by the crier of a court to enforce silence, when a proclamation is about to be made.

**OYES! OYES! OYES!** This is used in proclamations.

**OYSTER.** "Oyster-faced." It means in need of shaving, being an allusion to the oyster's beard.

## P.

**P'S AND Q'S.** "Mind you P's and Q's." Be careful: be cautious. This expression comes from three different sources. The one refers to the custom of the debts of the

customers of a public house being chalked up behind the doors with the number of pints or quarts which they owed with the letters P and Q. The other is due to Charles Knight who thinks that this phrase had its origin in a printing office. A novice was likely to be puzzled by the small Roman p's and q's; which closely resembled each other, and hence the novice was warned to mind his P's and Q's. The third originated with a French dancing master who taught his pupils to mind their *pieds* (feet) and *queues* (wigs) when making a bow.

**P.S.** An abbreviated form of the Latin phrase *post scriptum* meaning written afterwards. In English the words P.S. written at the bottom of the letter are spoken of as the postscript, and this word postscript has become a noun.

**PACK.** This word is commonly applied to dogs or wolves. But it is also applied to a group of persons who conspire together for evil purposes, as "A pack of robbers." But it is wrong to say "A pack of persons."

**PAD.** To pad the hoof. Thieves and tramps use this expression to signify to walk, to tramp. Perhaps the more correct form would be "to hoof the pad" that is, to tramp on the pad or road. This word is used in two senses. When it signifies a cushion, it comes from the root meaning a bag, as also the words "pod" and "pudding." When it signifies to walk, it comes from the Sanskrit *pad* meaning foot, and this word is often used for a narrow walk or footway, and from this we also have the verb "to pad along," meaning to trudge along the path. It is probable that the word "pad" is only another form of the word "path." A horse whose only credit lies in ambling along country lanes, and being unfit for hunting purposes, is contemptuously spoken of as "pad."

**PADDING.** Comparatively this is a new word in the English language, and it means the materials used for stuffing a cushion or a saddle to increase the bulk. Hence figuratively padding an article in a newspaper or padding a novel means inserting matter into it with a view to swell the size.

**PADDY.** Common name for an Irishman, the word being an abbreviation of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland.

**PAG.** "Pag all your rags away." (Lincolnshire dialect.) Carry all your belongings away, pag being quite a common word for carry. "Pag rag day." May 14th, as it is on that date that the servants of Lincolnshire begin their yearly holidays, or lok round for new situations.

**PAIN.** The almost universal belief that pain is the penalty we pay for our evil-doing is strengthened by the derivation of the word, for it comes from the Latin *poena*, penalty, punishment.

**PAINT.** "Painted Peepers." (Pugilistic.) Eyes bruised or blackened from a blow.

**PAIR.** This word remains pair in the plural when it is preceded by a number; otherwise it takes the singular. "Two pair of gloves," but "many pairs of trousers."—*A Desk-Book of Errors in English.*

**PAIRING.** (Parliamentary.) When a Liberal and a Conservative agree together to be absent from the House during a sitting, they are said to be pairing. By so doing they do not affect the voting of a Bill in case of a division.

**PAL.** The same as chuun. This word is very popular in England.

**PALL.** Originally a nautical expression meaning to stop. The authoritative order "pall that" means stop that, from pall, a small instrument which is used to stop the capstan in a ship. A sailor on hearing an extraordinary piece of news, exclaims "you pall me" *i.e.* you confound me. "I am palled" means I cannot say more.

**PALM.** The palm tree is so called because of its resemblance to the human palm with the fingers open. The Ancient Greek and Romans surrounded the palm tree with the halo of glory and revered it as an emblem of strength and victory, the Greek word being *palame*, the Latin *palma*. "Palm grease." A bribe.

**PALMER.** A thief especially one who steals tiny little articles in a shop by making them adhere to his palm.

**PAMPHLET.** There are various opinions as to the origin of this word. Dr. Johnson suggests *par-un-filet* (held "by a thread") *i.e.* stitched, but not bound. Wedgwood thinks that we get it from the Spanish *papeleta*, a written slip of paper. But it is Skeat who gives us the most acceptable derivation. He attributes the origin of the word to Pamphila, a Greek lady who wrote a book of anecdotes.

**PAN.** God of Shepherds, guardian of bees, and patron of fowling and fishing, *i.e.*, the God of Nature.

**PANACEA.** It is a compound of two Greek words *pan akeomai* meaning all I cure. Hence panacea figuratively means a universal cure.

**PANDEMONIUM.** Milton first invented this word and used it in his *Paradise Lost* to signify Hell. Now the term is used in a general sense.

**PANI.** (Anglo-Indian.) Water. This word is used extensively in many Anglo-Indian compound names, such as *Walaiti-pani* meaning soda-water.

**PANIC.** "Pan, a general in the army which Bacchus led into India, being surrounded by an opposing army while encamped in a rocky valley, caused his men in the middle of the night to set up a simultaneous shout. The hills echoing the sound, so increased its volume that the enemy took fright and fled. Unreasoning and groundless fears hence take the name of panic."—Potter.

**PANSY.** The Greeks gave the name of *panacea* to a plant whose virtue was to cure all diseases and sorrows, and *panacea* means all-heal. The other English name for this flower is heart's-ease, and this shows that the belief in the virtue of this plant was common to both countries.

**PANTS.** It is a vulgar word for pantaloons. Trousers is a better word.

**PAPER.** "To paper a house." Here "house" means theatre, and to paper a house is to fill a theatre with "orders." (See "Orders.")

**PARADISE.** French slang for the gallery of a theatre. The gallery audience are called the gods of the gallery.

**PARADOX.** A paradox is a statement which common sense cannot accept, and hence the expression a "seeming paradox" is erroneous.

**PARAPHERNALIA.** It comes from the Greek *para*, beyond, the *pherné*, a dowry, and it means something more than the dowry which a wife brings with her—her clothes, jewels, ornaments &c. This word is also used figuratively as in the following sentence "What is all this paraphernalia for?" in the sense of "show." Bag and baggage of a person are also called paraphernalia.

**PARASITE.** It comes from the Greek *para*, beside, and *sitos*, food, signifying one who feeds at another's cost. Originally it means an animal or plant that lives on its kindred, and hence it is used figuratively for one who hangs on another as a flatterer with a view to serve his own ends.

**PAPE.** Cutting off the rind of a fruit, while to peel is to pull it off. "We pare an apple, and peel an orange."

**PAR EXCELLENCE.** Superbly excellent. His acting on the stage was *par excellence*.

**PARISH.** This is derived from the Greek *para*, beside, and *oikos*, a house. England is divided into parishes, and it should be noted that a parish is not only an ecclesiastical division but it is also vested with local government in civil matters.

**PARKY.** Slang for cold and chilly. It is a bit parky to-day *i.e.* it is cold and chilly to-day.

**PARNASSIAN HEIGHTS.** When a poet or an artist reaches the zenith of fame by producing a masterpiece, he is said to reach "Parnassian heights." It also means the highest flight of imagination which takes place in a poet's song. In Greek mythology, Mount Parnassus was the shrine of Apollo, the God of Song.

**PARNEY.** (Anglo-Indian.) Rain. This is an Anglo-Indian slang from the Hindustani word *pani* meaning water.

**PARSON.** It comes from the Latin *persona*, a person, hence "person" and "parson" are one and the same. Blackstone says that a parson is so called, because by his person, the church, which is an invisible body, is represented.

**PART WITH, PART FROM.** We say "A man parts with his wife"; we likewise say "A man parts from his wife." A man parts with his wife lovingly, regretfully, and looks hopefully forward to a reunion. A man parts from his wife angrily, and rushes off in a rage to the Divorce Court to obtain a judicial separation; and afterwards, whether the separation is confirmed by law or not, we still speak of the husband and wife as having parted from each other. The feud between them resulting in such an act is considered to be so bitter that, although the parting is mutual, the language which we employ respecting it, represents them not as agreeing to part, but represents each as acting independently of the other.—Moon—*Bad English Exposed*.

**PARTAKE.** Partake is often used in the sense of eat and drink, but it should be noted that one cannot partake of a meal or drink by oneself, unless he has someone to share it with him.

**PARTER.** A free liberal person.

**PARTHIAN SHOT.** A telling remark made to a person who is beaten in argument. In warfare the Parthians fled before the enemy apparently defeated, but in retreating turned in their saddles and shot with fatal accuracy.

**PARTIALITY.** This word is commonly used for partly, even by such a journal as *The Times*:—"That the gravity of the situation is partially appreciated by the bureaucracy may be inferred from. . . ." But it should be noted that "partially" should be reserved as far as possible for the meaning "with partiality."

**PARTICULAR.** A mistress, especially one belonging particularly to one man. In the time of George IV. this word was very common, but it is seldom used now. The French *particulière* means wife or mistress.

**PARTY.** This word in its common untechnical use signifies "man associated," and this use of it is offensive, although Shakespeare has it in *The Tempest*. But it has a technical

use also and that is the proper use of the word and in that sense it means "one or more persons as regarded in relation to one or more others." Thus the parties (parts) in a lawsuit may be a single person on each side.

**PASSENGER.** It is derived from the Latin *passus*, a step and it signifies one who makes a passage. The proper word should, therefore, be "passager," the letter "n" being excremental as in "messenger."

**PASTE.** "Pasty." Book-binder. Paste board. A visiting card. To paste board a person. To drop a card at a person's house when he or she is absent.

**PASTER.** Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary defines the paster of a horse as the knee of a horse, and when asked by a lady how he had arrived at that definition, he answered:—"From ignorance, madam, pure ignorance." Florio is of opinion that there is a verb to paster meaning to fetter, or to shackle. It comes from the old French *pasturon*, a derivative of *pasture*; such shackles being tied round the horses' feet to prevent them from straying, while grazing.

**PASTIME.** (Pass and time.) Recreation; game; sport. Shenstone says that "Pastime is a word that should never be used but in a bad sense; it is vile to say such a thing is agreeable because it helps to pass the time away."

**PATCH.** "Not a patch upon." Not to be compared to, not to be matched with. Similar expression is "Not fit to hold a candle to," as Ram is not a patch upon Lal.

**PATIENT.** This word both as a noun and as an adjective conveys the idea of suffering and enduring. A doctor's patient suffers and endures, and so does the man who is patient. It comes from the Latin *patiens*, present participle of *patior*, meaning I suffer, endure.

**PATOIS.** This word comes to us through the French from the Latin *patrius*, ancestral. It means the dialect which descends from one generation to another in rude unlettered districts.—*Brand*.

**PATTERER.** A man who sells his articles or wares by long harangues in the public thoroughfares.

**PAUL PRY.** A person who meddles with the affairs of other people much to their annoyance. It originates from Paul Pry, a character of that kind in J. Poole's comedy written in 1825.

**PAVEMENT PROFESSION.** This term is applied to a street entertainer in opposition to a stage actor.

**PAW.** Hand. Paw-cases. Gloves.

**PAY.** In slang language it means to beat or thrash. Shakespeare uses this word in that sense. It also means to



deliver. "Pay that letter to Mr. So and so," is a very common direction to a Chinese servant. Pay away. To go on or proceed as with a story or narrative. It is taken from the nautical phrase pay-away which means to allow a rope to run out of the vessel.

**PEACH.** A complimentary epithet for a young lady. A similar expression is "Plum." This term is also frequently used by omnibus-men for an informer who is appointed by the proprietors to count passengers and stoppages. Hence a peach is an informer against conductors and drivers.

**PEATS.** Formerly "peat" was "beat" from the Anglo-Saxon *betan*, to better (to mend the fire). Blocks of dried peat are used for fuel, and when these become red hot underneath, they are turned over so that they might give warmth, and hence "to turn the peats" figuratively means to change the subject.

**PEBBLE-BEACHED.** Very poor. A similar expression is "stony broke." Nowadays this expression is not so commonly used as "stony broke."

**PECK.** Food. "Peck and booze" means food and drink.

**PEDAGOGUE.** It comes from the Greek *paidos*, a boy, and *agagos*, leading. A pedagogue was a boy or slave who used to lead children to school. But now the term is sometimes contemptuously applied to a schoolmaster.

**PEDIGREE.** The entire word is *pie'd-da-grès*, a stem of degrees or a stem of lineage, which is its present meaning. The French word *pie'd-de-grue*, means a crane's foot, and a table of pedigree takes the form of a bird's foot.

**PEEL, PEAL.** These two words should not be confused. Peel designates "rind," while peal designates "ring."

**PEELER.** A policeman; so called from Sir Robert Peel, who reorganised the police system in Ireland. Though a policeman all over England is called peeler, in my opinion it is more appropriate to apply this word to an Irish policeman only.

**PEEPERS.** Eyes.

**PEERS OF THE REALM.** The derivation of the word "peer" usually given is the Latin *pærem*, the accusative of *par*, meaning equal. It is more likely, however, that it comes from the Norman *pier* or *père*, meaning father, because in the wording of the old enactments the exact words were "by the common consent of the fathers and the people of the land."

**PEG.** A drink especially of brandy and soda-water. In India "I'll have a peg" for "I'll have a drink" is very common, whereas in England it is never heard. "To take one down

a peg." To humble or humiliate one. "To peg out." Common expression for "to die."

**PEGASUS.** The winged horse of the Muses, which sprang from the blood of Medusa when she was slain by Perseus.

**PENNY.** "Penny wedding." A wedding in which the guests bring a contribution with a view to assist the young couple in setting up a house. "Penny-a-liner." A literary hack who is popularly believed to receive a penny a line for his contribution to a newspaper. He is a contributor of local news, accidents, social scandal, fashionable gossip, club jokes &c. The oldest form of the word "penny" is "pending" signifying something pledged or pawned, and formerly the penny of the workman's wage was a token or a pledge on the part of his master which he redeemed by paying its equivalent in corn or wool or food or clothing. This custom gave rise to the phrase "to turn an honest penny" which is now used in the sense of "to trade." The plural of penny is either pennies or pence. Pennies mean a number of individual coins; pence signifies a specific amount of money. "Peter's Pence." In Saxon times this was a tax of a penny on each house throughout England, and it was so called because it was collected on St. Peter's Day. It was also called "Hearth Money," as it was levied on every house.

**PER.** "*Per capita*." This Latin phrase literally means by heads, *i.e.* by the number of individuals. "*Per Stripes*." This Latin phrase literally means by stems *i.e.* by the number of families; as opposed to *per capita*, by the number of individuals.

**PERCH.** A resting place. "I am off to perch" means I am going to bed. Roost means the same thing. (See Roost.)

**PERFECT.** Comes from the Latin *per-facio*, meaning I do through *i.e.* I do thoroughly. "Perfectly killing." A girl who is very stylishly and attractively dressed is said to be "perfectly killing," so also an absurd and comical joke which makes one roar with laughter. I have often rocked with laughter at the use of this expression.

**PERFORM, PLAY.** To perform upon a piano is to practise upon a piano, but to play a piano is to play seriously with a view to entertain oneself or others.

**PERSON, INDIVIDUAL.** The word person is formed of the two Latin words, *per*, through; and *sono*, I sound—or to sound through. Originally it was a dramatic term and applied to the actor's mask through which the actor's voice sounded. The transition was quite easy, the word being transferred to the actor from the fact of his voice sounding through the mask. Later on it came to mean in a legal sense a man's personal rights and duties which were dependent upon his position in life, and it was not until Roman

times that the word acquired the meaning of an individual human being. This meaning of the word was in all likelihood given rise to by the use of this word in Christian Theology for a Person of the Trinity. The word individual which literally means "inseparable" comes from the Latin *in divido* which meant an indivisible particle or atom. In medieval logic this word signified a member of a class or species, and in theology it referred to the Trinity. It was only in Shakespeare's time that it acquired its present meaning in English. The word person is always restricted to human beings of any rank, class or quality; the word individual is applied not only to human beings, but to animals and things. The word person can be used in a depreciatory sense or otherwise as "he is an objectionable person" or "he is a person of importance."

**PERSONALTY, PERSONALITY.** The former is a legal term and is opposed to realty. By this term we mean personal property of any kind, or in other words, chattels, real and personal. Personality is personal self.

**PERSPICACITY, PERSPICUITY.** These two terms should not be confused. Perspicacity is "acuteness, clear-sightedness or penetration"; perspicuity is "clearness of expression or style, lucidity"; and is always applied to writing and speech.

**PERSUADE, CONVINCE.** Persuade comes from the Latin *suadeo*, advise, *i.e.* that which convinces, and convince comes from the Latin *vincere*, to conquer. Convince is a stronger word than persuade. When we try to convince a person, we solely appeal to his reason; but in persuasion, apart from reason or argument, we may act on his will by inducements or motives.

**PERSUADERS.** Spurs, from the idea of persuading horse to go by putting spurs to him.

**PERSUASION.** This word is often used curiously. Persuasion signifies the fact of being persuaded, but newspapers often use it to mean "a sect or way of belief," and strangely enough they apply it to the very sect who do not allow themselves to be persuaded.

**PERT.** In Middle English it was "apert," and in meaning it is the same as the Latin *expertus*. The older sense of this word was brisk or sprightly, and Milton uses it in that sense in *Comos*. Strange to say that the word pert has come to signify its very opposite malapert meaning impertinent. "She is very pert," means she is very saucy or impudent. It is generally applied to women.

**PERUSE.** Some people use this word in the sense of to read. But to peruse is to read with care, and is almost synonymous with scan.

**PETER FUNK.** A bogus bidder at auctions. He is employed by the auctioneer to bid against an intending purchaser in order to raise the price of the article.

**PETTICOAT.** "Petticoat Government." The rule of women. "In petticoats." It has two meanings viz. (a) a child in the nursery is said to be still in petticoats, and (b) it relates to the female sex, opposed to "in trousers." "Petticoat Pensioner." A man who lives on a prostitute's earnings.

**PETTY.** The French word *petit* meaning little is applied to a small boy, and the word petty was similarly used. The French *petit* applies to both sexes.

**PEW.** It comes from the Latin *podium* which was the balcony where the Emperor and other celebrities sat and witnessed the famous gladiators fight. Even now the "pews" (seats) in the Church are reserved by the aristocracy and the wealthy classes.

**PHAETON.** This Greek participle meant shining and the Son of Phoebus (the Sun) was appropriately called Phaeton. He became so ambitious in time that he entreated his father to allow him to drive his heavenly chariot. He did ride it but with disastrous result. The vehicle phaeton is so called, after the mythological Phaeton, and not because it shines.

**PHEASANT.** It comes from the Greek *Phasianos*, "pertaining to the Phasis" from pheasants being found in great numbers near the river Phasis. Although now naturalised in England, the pheasant originally came from the East.

**PHENOMENON.** It is the singular of phenomena. I have heard educated people using the expression "a remarkable phenomena," which is incorrect.

**A PHILIPPIC.** A scathing speech which denounced an opponent. In the fourth century B.C. Demosthenes stirred the Athenians against King Philip by making three bitter speeches known as the "Philippics."

**PHILTER.** A sort of drug to which the ancients ascribed the virtue of having the power to excite love.

**PHYSICIAN, SURGEON.** Three sources are given as to the derivation of this word, viz. (a) from the Sanskrit *bhu*, to be, i.e. one who deals with the laws of being (existence), and (b) from the Greek *physis* meaning nature, and (c) from the French *phisique* meaning science of medicine. Thus physician is one who is skilled in the art of healing. Surgeon was formerly spelt *chirurgion*, which comes from two Greek words meaning working with the hands. Surgery, the art of the surgeon, used to be spelt *surgenry*, and surgery is sometimes employed to signify the surgeon's working room. Inasmuch as the art of healing includes both the adminis-

tration of drugs as well as the removal of those parts of the body the diseased condition of which is injurious to the harmonious working of the whole system, the physicians of old were in practice partly surgeons as well. A living example of this is even now seen in some of our familiar village barbers, in India. The modern physician, however, considers it below his dignity, so to say, to handle a knife, the use of which he now willingly and with good reasons too relegates to his friend the surgeon. It is worthy of note that in some of the London hospitals their physicians are called doctors, and surgeons misters. Some neurologists of late as Sir Victor Horsley in England and Professor Harvey Cushing in America have partly reverted to the type of the old physician in so far as some diseases of the brain are concerned.

**PICK.** "Pick-me-up." A stimulant. A cup of tea or coffee make fine pick-me-ups, though they are not so nourishing as is generally supposed. "To pick off." To kill separately; to shoot one by one. "The pick of the basket." The very best of anything. "It cannot be pretended that we have thus far succeeded in obtaining the pick of the basket."—*Daily Telegraph*, 1885. "Pick up, pick out." "To pick up a thing" is merely to take it up, as to pick up a book. "To pick out a thing" is to choose it discriminatingly from amongst others, and therefore implies effort. From amongst fifty volumes that were lying before him, he carefully picked out the one which he wanted. "To pick up" also means to recover health, as, a long change of air after his illness enabled him to pick up. We also say "picking up a language" which denotes superficiality. "Picking up." Explained by quotation. "There, it seems, the girls of the working class go out picking up, just as the boys go out 'mashing.' They go by twos or threes, each little party of the same sex; the girls looking in the shop windows and giggling, the boys sauntering along, cigarette in mouth and hands in pockets. Presently the latter jostle up against the former. They apologise. No apology, they are told, is needed. 'Going to market?' asks the lad. 'Yes,' is the reply. 'May we come along?' 'Very well.' Thus is the ice speedily and satisfactorily broken."—*Globe*.

**PICKERS.** Shakespeare used it for the hands.

**PICKLE.** "In a nice pickle." Quite in a muddle or in a fix. He got himself in a nice pickle.

**PICKWICKIAN SENSE.** This phrase is borrowed from Dickens's novel *Pickwick Papers*, and is now applied to any remark which, though apparently harsh, is not to be taken in the ordinary sense, but in a whimsical humorous sense.

**PICTURE.** Formerly it meant a painting, but now it is applied to any object or scene which is represented as an illustration.

Photographs, pencil-sketches, drawings &c. are all now known by the general term pictures.

**PIECE.** Shakespeare applies this term to a strumpet. "A piece." Such an expression as "We went along the road a piece" is a provincial vulgarism. A contemptuous term for a woman. One often hears "She is a nice piece." "Piece of calico" (American). A girl or woman. "Piece out." This phrase has two meanings, viz. (a) to increase in length, as, the piecing out of an old man's life, and (b) to supply what is wanting by adding pieces together, as, to piece out a story. "To give another a piece of one's mind." To take one to task in a blunt manner, as, I gave him a piece of my mind.

**PIG.** "A pig's whisper." It has two meanings viz., (a) a very loud whisper, as, he spoke to me in a pig's whisper. The allusion is to the grunting of the pig which is always loud and (b) a very short space of time. "To drive one's pig to market." To snore. "To bring one's pigs to a pretty market." To sell at a loss or to manage one's affairs badly. "Pig-headed." Obstinate. "Pigs." (Cambridge University.) Members of St. John's College are called pigs. "Pig in a poke." Anyone making a hasty bargain which he afterwards regrets is said to be buying "a pig in a poke." Farmers used to carry their pigs to the market in "pags" or "pokes," but careful buyers, would not judge the animals by the weight alone, but wanted to see the pigs.

**PIKE.** "To pike." To run or be off. "If you don't like it, take a short stick and pike it."

**PILL-BOX.** Doctor's carriage, is so called.

**PILOT.** This word is derived from the old Dutch *piglen*, to sound the water, and *loot*, lead. Hence the literal meaning of the word is "one who uses the sounding-lead."

**PIN.** "Pin money." In bygone times, this term was used for a special allowance made to wives for the purchase of pins when these were rather costly. In modern times the term is retained for an allowance made to wives for their personal expenses apart from their housekeeping and dress money. "To put in the pin." To refrain from drinking. The metaphor is taken from the ancient tankard which was furnished with a row of pins or pegs to regulate the amount drunk by each person. Another explanation offered is that it has a reference to the custom of the Irishman putting a pin in the right-hand cuff of his coat, when he pledges himself to temporary abstinence from drink. The object is that in case he forgets his vow, he would see the pin rising before his eyes like an avenging angel, when he lifts the glass to his mouth.

**PINK.** "In the pink of condition." In a perfect state of health. It had its origin on the racecourse where horses in a perfect state were spoken of as being "in the pink of condition."

**PIPE.** "Pipes of Pan." "Pan" was the Greek god who looked after flocks, pastures and bees, and invented the reed musical pipe. By playing on this pipe he could incite mortals to peace or war. Now-a-days the term "Pipes of Pan" means "the voice of nature." "Pipe off." A vulgar way for saying "to take in at a glance." "To pipe one's eye." To weep.

"He then began to eye his pipe,  
And then to pipe his eye."—*Hood.*

"To put a person's pipe out." To annoy him; to frustrate him in his plans. A wife could do nothing worse than to put her husband's pipe out to annoy him. "Put that in your pipe and smoke it." Listen to what I say, and think over it. This expression generally accompanies a reproach.

**PIPER.** A person employed by omnibus proprietors to act as a spy on the conductor. A similar expression is "peach."

**PITCH.** "To pitch a yarn." To tell a wonderful story. "To pitch in or to pitch into one." To attack one either with vigorous language or with vigorous blows. I say, old chap, don't pitch into me like that. After having high words, they pitched into each other.

**PITCHER.** "Pitchers have ears." This proverbial expression means "there are listeners who may hear, however you may try to preserve secrecy." Shakespeare says "Pitchers have ears and I have many servants." Similar expression is "Walls have ears."

**PITHY, TERSE.** To put a thing in a pithy manner is to put it in a forcible and striking manner. Terse originally meant rubbed, then it came to mean refined, and as applied to style it means compressed.

**PITY, SYMPATHY.** Pity is prompted by a feeling which makes us feel sorry for another's distress. Sympathy is a feeling which makes us feel the actual distress of another, as if we were sharing it with him. Those whom we despise we may pity for their sufferings, but we cannot sympathise with them.

**PLACE.** Originally it came through the Latin *plata*, from the Greek word for "broad" city. Now it designates any locality or any situation in the abstract, and has thus become quite a general term without losing its meaning. "A place in the sun." This phrase had its origin recently in Germany, and it means determination to get hold of such portions of the earth as are still unfought for with a view

to extend commerce and increase population. Any person who has done some good work in some walk of life is said to have earned a place in the sun.

**PLAIN.** "Plain as a pike-staff." Very plain or evident. This is as plain as a pike-staff means this is very evident. "Plain work." Sewing work that is not ornamental. "Plain woman." It means ugly woman. Plain is used euphemistically. "Homely woman" is also used in this sense.

**PLAN, SCHEME, DEVISE.** Plan is the most general term of the three. Scheme sometimes carries with it the idea of cunning. Devise means to "think out" the noun being device. Shakespeare says :—

"Devise but how you'll use him when he comes,  
And we two will devise to bring him hither."

**PLANK DOWN.** This term which is so often used in the sense of paying out or laying down money, should as far as possible be avoided.

**PLANT, PLANTATION.** We plant a colony, but plantation is nowadays applied to trees only. Formerly, however, colonies were known as "plantations."

**PLAY.** "To play truant." To stay away from one's work. School boys, as a rule, are fond of playing truant or taking French leave. "Playing Gooseberry." Thrusting oneself upon two persons who are so perfectly happy that they resent the presence of another.

**PLEASE.** "Pleased as Punch." Extremely pleased. He is returning home to India after finishing his studies in England and seems to be as pleased as Punch.

**PLEASURE, HAPPINESS.** Pleasure is a generic term which involves in itself the idea which underlies other terms and hence it is most extensively used. Happiness is an ordinary term, and is applied to that sense of pleasure which we derive from external objects. It always excludes the idea of chance, whereas pleasure may arise from monetary circumstances.

**PLOD.** Derived from the Gaelic word *plod* meaning a pool, and it conveys the idea of tramping through mire and wet. Hence it means to go through anything in a painful and laborious manner. Gray uses this word in the opening stanzas in his famous *Elegy*.

**PLOUGH.** "To be ploughed." To fail to pass an examination. It is a college slang, equivalent to "plucked." "Ploughed" also means "drunk." "To put one's hand to the plough." To undertake serious work or important duties. This is a Biblical phrase.



**PLOVER.** Derived from the Latin *pluvia* meaning rain. The bird is called plover because it is invariably seen and caught in a rainy season.

**PLUCK.** Literally it means the heart, liver, and lungs of an animal. Among low classes this word is used in the sense of courage or a stout heart. People fond of diction, it is a pity, have started using this word. "Plucked." To be plucked in an examination is to fail in it. It is a university term. The allusion is to the ancient practice of plucking (pulling) the sleeve by the proctor of the university of those whose degrees were refused.

**PLUNDER.** Although this word was common to all the Continental nations of Europe, it first came into England in 1630. According to Fuller, the soldiers who assisted Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, introduced this word. In the Swedish language it is *plundra*. In southern and western States of America it signifies personal luggage, goods &c. The Canadians use the word "booty" in the same sense.

**PLUTO.** King of the infernal regions.

**POCKET.** "To pocket an insult." To put up with an insult without retorting. Shakespeare uses "pocket up" in this sense:—"Well, ruffian, I must pocket up these wrongs." "To pocket dibs." To receive salary or profits. "To put one's hand in one's pocket." To give money in charity. "To put one's pride in one's pocket." To lay aside one's pride for the time being and submit to circumstances. "To be in pocket, to be out of pocket." The former implies gain, the latter implies loss. A native would preferably say "I was money in pocket." "Pocket Borough." It is a borough where the influence of the potentate is so great that he can control the election of any candidate he wants. It is now a thing of the past, because it was done away with by the coming in of voting by ballot.

**PODGY.** Drunk; fat and short. This word is in common use among lady novelists in the sense of "fat and short."

**POETASTER.** An inferior poet. It comes from the Italian *poetastro* meaning a paltry poet.

**POINT-BLANK.** From the French *point blanc*, meaning white spot (in the centre of a target). This term is used to express something which is direct and explicit, as, "a point-blank" denial, meaning flat denial.

**POKE.** As a noun it means a bag, pocket, sack, as in the phrase "to buy a pig in a poke" (which see). It is also slang for booty or plunder, and *The Times* used it in that sense as far back as 1860. As a verb it has always been literary. "To poke one's nose into other people's affairs," "poke nose," "to poke fun at another" are colloquial expressions.

**POLICY.** "Policy of pin-pricks." (Political.) When a political party dabbles in minor acts in a hostile manner towards the opposing party, being unable to cope with the greater questions, that party is said to be indulging in a policy of pin-pricks. *The Times* first applied this phrase in 1898 to the policy of France when it referred to the conflicting Colonial Interest of that country in Great Britain.

**POLISH OFF.** To finish off anything quickly. We have to go to the theatre, so please polish off your dinner quickly.

**POLITICS.** This is a singular word of plural form.

**POLITY, POLICY.** Though both these words come from the same Latin word, they are not identical in sense. "Polity is the permanent system of government of a state, a church, or a society; policy is the method of management with reference to the attainment of certain ends. The national polity of the United States is republican; each administration has a policy of its own.

**POLL.** (University.) This is a contraction of *polloi*, and the Greek word from which it comes means many. Poll is the term applied to the examination for the ordinary degree of B.A., as distinguished from the Honours examination.

**POLLY.** A cricket term meaning easy, as a polly catch. Similar expression is "a dolly catch."

**POONA.** This is the costermonger's corruption of "pound" or sovereign.

**POP.** "I'll pop in." This colloquial expression means "I'll drop in to see you." "To pop the question." A colloquial slang phrase for making a proposal of marriage. "Pop your corn" (American). Say what you have to say or speak out. Pop-corn, when roasted, pops or expands suddenly.

**POPULACE, POPULAR, PEOPLE.** The word populace came into the English language in the sixteenth century from the Italian *popolaccio*, and was a term of abuse. In England it is still used for mob or rabble. The adjective "popular" also had an unfavourable meaning. The word "people" in the sense in which we use it now first acquired that sense during the Civil War, when Parliament made a declaration that "the people are under God, the original of all just power."

**POSSE.** *Posse comitatus* (Latin). An available fighting force of a country.

**POST.** This word comes from the Latin *positions*, placed. "How various are the senses in which the word post is employed! Post Office; post haste; a post standing the ground; a military post; an official post; to post a ledger. Yet, when, once on the right track, nothing is easier than to bring all these uses of post to a common centre. Post is

the Latin *positus*, that which is placed. The piece is placed in the ground and becomes a post; a military station is a post for a man is placed in it; to travel post is to have relays of horses placed at intervals so that no delay can occur; the post office is that which availed itself at first of this mode of communication; to post a ledger is to place or register its several items."—*Trench*. In slang the verb to post means to pay down. The expression "post the pony" is used in the sense of to place the stakes played for on the table. As a University term to "post" is to put up the name of one who has not paid for food supplied by the College, and this precludes him from having any more until he pays up. "Posted up." Well acquainted with the subjects in question. Similar expression is "up to the mark." The metaphor is drawn from the counting house. "Post and rails" (Australian). It means wooden matches as distinguished from wax vestas. "Post and rails tea." Coarse tea with stalks and leaves floating in it, just the kind supplied to station hands. It is so called from the stalks and leaves floating about, when it is decocted.

**POSTER.** A large printed bill or a placard put up in a public place by way of general advertisement.

**POST-MORTEM.** (University.) At Cambridge this phrase is applied to the second examination which those who have "plucked" have to undergo.

**POT.** "To go to pot." It means to die, the metaphor being taken from the classic custom of burning the dead body and putting the ashes in an urn. It is also applied to tradesmen whose business is ruined or broken up. When you say to a person "go to pot," it means go and hang yourself, shut up your mouth and be quiet. "Pot luck." "To take pot luck," is to take chances in any matter. Originally it meant accepting an invitation to dinner made in good fellowship and being content with whatever might be in the pot for the meal. "Pot-boiler." An inferior production of a musician, poet or author given to the public with a view "to keep the pot boiling" (to make money) until his better work is recognised. "Pot-boilers sell more quickly than masterpieces." "Pot hat." Originally a top hat; sometimes a felt hat. "Pop gun." Toy gun. "Big pot." A man of importance. It is generally used for a great swell; originally an adept, a favourite in racing. Hence to put on the "big pot" is to bully or to patronise arrogantly.

**POTTY.** Dotty or soppy.

**PRANCER.** A horse.

**PREDICAMENT.** Aristotle classified conceptions into what he called "categories" meaning assertions. The Greek word was literally translated into Latin *praedicamentum*. In the

sentence "he is in a bad predicament," it means that he is in a fix or difficult situation.

**PREDICATE, PREDICT.** To predicate is simply to make an affirmative statement; to predict is to foretell.

**PREFER.** This verb is always followed by the preposition "to" and never by "than" by itself. Always say "I prefer this to that." The other construction is "I prefer this rather than that" and it should be noted that "than" must necessarily be preceded by rather. But the latter construction should be avoided as far as possible.

**PREMISE.** The words premise and premises are terms of logic and these were translated into Latin from the Arabic word meaning "put before." Then the word "premise" came to mean "the aforesaid" as a legal term, from which it soon came to be applied "to the aforesaid houses, lands," &c., mentioned in the "premises" of the deed. Thence it came to be applied to the house itself with its grounds &c.

**PREPENSE.** This word is derived from the Latin *pro* meaning before and *pensum* meaning weighed. Hence the word literally means weighed out beforehand. This word is now scarcely used except in the phrase "malice prepense" which means malice premeditated and therefore intentional.

**PREPOSSESSION, PREJUDICE.** Prepossession literally means prior possession, and signifies the taking possession of the mind beforehand, and is applied to a state of the feelings. It springs from casualties or from momentary effect or influence caused by external appearance, and is always used in a good sense. Prejudice literally means "prior judgment," and signifies a judgment beforehand, and is employed only for opinion. It is the fruit of a contracted education, and is, as a rule, used in a bad sense. We are always prepossessed in favour of a person, and mostly prejudiced against a person. Steele says "I take it for a rule, that in marriage the chief business is to acquire a prepossession in favour of each other." I would like to suggest that the expression "prepossessions and prejudices" might be used as synonymous for "likes and dislikes" though I have not seen it used as such. Prepossessing means "engaging," and is said especially of the external characteristics of a person or of the external appearance of a thing, such as ship or building. One can easily gather its meaning from the following quotation which I take from the *Evening News* dated May 22nd, 1914:—"Experts describe Shamrock IV., which is to be launched at Gosport on Tuesday as not at all prepossessing in appearance, but promising great speed."

**PREPOSTEROUS.** Comes from the Latin *prae*, before, and *posterus*, after, and hence it literally means setting value on that thing first which really ought to be last. The word, therefore, means absurd.

**PRESS.** "The press." Originally it meant the printing-machine, but now it signifies the newspapers of a country and all the business connected with printing and publishing. The reason is that as a thing becomes enlarged in idea, the word itself too adds to its significance. The word "navy" for instance, which originally meant a single ship, now covers the idea of a nation's ships of war with all their officers, guns, &c. "Press-gallery." A gallery set apart for newspaper reporters, especially in the House of Commons. "

**PRETTY.** This word when used as an adverb signifies fairly, tolerably, as "I am pretty well." But it should not be forgotten that it lacks definitiveness, as in the following sentence: "He is a pretty sick man, but is pretty sure to recover, being at all times pretty fortunate." "Pretty well." In good health. The American expression is "pretty good" for "pretty well." "Pretty horse-breakers." This term is applied to fashionable good-looking young women of bad reputation. The phrase has been recently adopted and used by *The Times* and other newspapers.

**PREVAIL.** This verb has three significations and in each case it takes a different preposition after it. When it is used in the sense of "to exercise influence" it is followed by the prepositions "upon" "on" or "with"; as "I prevailed upon him to join us in the party." When used to denote triumph or victory, it is followed by the prepositions "over" or "against" as "a weak man may sometimes prevail over a stronger one." When it signifies dissemination, it is followed by "through" or "throughout" as "Buddhism prevails throughout the length and breadth of Japan."

**PREVENTATIVE.** I have heard people using preventative for preventive. But preventative, which is a corruption of preventive, should not be used.

**PRIDE.** It comes from the French *prud*, the modern French word being *preux*, meaning "valiant, brave, gallant." As the proud (gallant) Normans who came over to England in the train of Edward the Confessor were very haughty and arrogant towards Englishmen whom they scorned, pride came to mean arrogance.

**FRIG.** Thief, "to prig" is to steal. In common parlance a prig is a conceited, contemptible fellow who adopts manner and dress not suited to him.

**PRIMA FACIE.** It is a Latin phrase meaning literally "on the first face." Hence it means presumably or at the first glance. There may be a strong *prima facie* case against a man, yet the evidence may not be sufficiently strong to convict him.

**PRIMED.** Said of students crammed for an examination. In

its common sense it is applied to one who is on the verge of intoxication.

**PRIMROSE.** "The primrose path." A road that lures a person to his destruction. Shakespeare uses this expression.

**PRINTER'S DEVIL.** A boy assistant in a printing office is so called. In the fifteenth century most people looked upon the printing art as the evil one, especially because a famous printer in Venice had a black assistant.

**PRO.** Short for professional as distinguished from an amateur. The term originated in the theatre, and was originally applied to a professional actor. We have cricket professionals, as distinguished from amateurs.

**PROBATE.** This word has two senses, viz., (a) the proving of a will, and (b) the document evidencing the proof of a will.

**PROCRUSTEAN.** "Procrustean bed." A couch which causes one discomfort by making him feel it. The reference is to the notorious robber Procrustes, whose practice was to lay his prisoners on a couch and chop their limbs off, if they proved too long; if too short, they were stretched to the required length.

**PRODIGIOUS.** Originally this word signified ominously prophetic, and Beaumont and Fletcher in their drama *Philaster* use the expression "a prodigious meteor" in the sense of an ominous meteor. Now, this word denotes only magnitude.

**PROMINENT, PREDOMINANT.** Prominent denotes hanging over. "The nose on a man's face is a prominent feature owing to its projecting situation." Predominant (from *dominor* to rule) denotes ruling or dominating over others. The Scottish term for prominent is outstanding which too conveys the idea of hanging over.

**PROP.** It is used for propose in the game of solo whist. I prop means I propose.

**PROPAGANDA.** A congregation in Rome the object of which is to spread the Roman Catholic religion. Now it is applied to any society or institution which make it their business to supply information about any scheme or idea by speaking or writing.

**PROPER CROWD.** Australian for "gang." It means a circle or a clique. An Australian would speak of Mr. Asquith's followers (clique) as his "proper crowd."

**PROPERTY, PROPRIETY.** Originally both these words were no more than different spellings of the same word proper. Now the word property is only used for material things, while propriety refers to mental or moral fitness of things.

**PROPHECY, PROPHECY.** A prophecy is a prediction, to prophesy is to predict. The difference in spelling should be noted. The former is the noun, while the latter is the verb.

**PROPTIATION.** (Biblical.) Reconciliation. "Christ is the propitiation for our sins."

**PROPOSAL, PROPOSITION.** A proposal is a plan or scheme which invites a plain answer "yes" or "no"; a proposition is a statement submitted for reflection, discussion or consideration.

**PROPOSE, PURPOSE.** Discriminate carefully between these two words. To propose is to offer, while to purpose is to intend. "One proposes to a young lady if one's purpose is to marry her."

**PROSPERITY, HAPPINESS.** Prosperity refers to the external appendages of a man, and, therefore, consists in the increase of power, honours, wealth and the like, *e.g.* the prosperity of India depends upon its industrial development. Happiness refers to the mind, and properly speaking, lies only in the mind. A man who is satisfied with the present enjoyment of things is always happy. An influential and wealthy man is prosperous, but is not necessarily happy.

"Happiness is to no spot confined,  
If you preserve a firm and equal mind,  
It is here, there and everywhere."

**PROTEST.** In parliamentary language, a protest is a peculiar privilege of the House of Lords, each peer has a right to enter his protest (dissent) upon the journals of the House, when a vote passes which is opposed to the views which he holds.

**PROVEN.** There is a growing tendency among some writers and reporters especially to use proven instead of proved. "Proved" is a better word. The expression "not proven" is a law term used with reference to a charge that has neither been proved nor disproved.

**PROVIDING, PROVIDED.** Provided is a conjunction, whereas providing is not, and one should not be used for the other. "I shall come, provided (not providing) the weather permits me."

**PROVOST.** It comes from the Latin *prepositus* meaning one set over. Hence a provost is the head or chief of certain "bodies" as the colleges at Cambridge and Oxford.

**PRUDENT, PRUDENTIAL.** Prudent refers to the quality of being prudent or wise. A prudential consideration is one which puts all motives in the balance and allows prudence to outweigh them all. The use of prudently for prudentially should be avoided.

**PRUNING, LOPPING.** Pruning a tree is depriving it of some of its branches in order to make the other grow with greater strength. Lopping is cutting off the branches of a tree with a view to sell them.

**PUB.** An abbreviation of "public-house" where people have their drinks. It is also called an ale-house.

**PUFF.** To swell with praise. To puff a book is to applaud it in a newspaper with a view to excite the curiosity of the readers and Bacon uses it in this sense.

**PUG.** An abbreviation of "pugilist."

**PUISNE.** This French term literally means *later born*, and is applied to a judge of a chief court or high court of lower rank than a chief justice, in India.

**PULL.** "To pull up." The peculiarity of the English language makes itself apparent in the two directly contradictory significations of the verb "to pull up." A policeman asks the driver of a stationary vehicle "to pull up" meaning "to move forward" and the same driver can be asked "to pull up" *i.e.* come to a standstill, if the vehicle is moving. The original sense of "pulling up a horse" is to bring him to a standstill by pulling up the reins. "To pull round." To take a turn for the better and recover. He became worse every day and the doctor had given him up, but he managed to pull round. "To pull on together." To work harmoniously. "Master and a trusted servant always pull together." One often hears the expression "pull on together" as "they can't pull on together" *i.e.* "they can't get on well together." "To pull one's legs." To impose upon one by humbugging and fooling, *i.e.* to chaff. He asked me to meet him this evening at a certain place, and when I arrived there, he was nowhere to be seen. Afterwards I found out that he did not intend to keep the appointment and that he was only pulling my legs. "To pull one's self together." This metaphor is used for collecting one's thoughts, or for cooling oneself down from an excited state of mind. It is, as a rule, used by lady novelists, but never by a writer of literary eminence. "To pull one by the sleeve." To remind. "To be pulled up." To be brought up before a magistrate. It is always best for the public safety that every thief should be pulled up. "To pull means to drink. Come, take a pull at it," *i.e.*, drink up. "To have the pull over another." To have an advantage over him. "I have the pull over you" means "you are in my power." "To pull the long bow." To tell falsehoods. Story-tellers always pull the long bow. "To pull a long face." To look blue. "To make a pull." (Cricket.) To hit a straight ball crookedly. As a rule, this is generally done intentionally.



**PUNCH.** A kind of drink. Although the word itself and the beverage are characteristically British, the name comes from the Hindustani *panch* and the Sanskrit *Pancha*, both meaning five. As the drink is composed of five ingredients, viz., spirit, water, sugar, lemon and spice, it is just probable that some Indian prince introduced the name into England.

**PUNK.** To extract information by a roundabout way.

**PUNKAH.** (Anglo-Indian.) A fan.

**PURPOSE, CAUSE.** A purpose is an end or aim towards which our action tends. A cause is the power which produces an effect.

**PURSE.** "Purse-proud." A puffed-up man because of wealth. "What is so hateful to a poor man as the purse-proud arrogance of a rich one?"—*Observer*. "To make up a purse." To collect subscriptions on behalf of a person. "His friends knowing his straitened circumstances made up a purse for him."

**PUSH.** I am awfully pushed for money means I am very short of money. "The whole push." In English slang "push" is used for crowd, and "the whole push" is a vulgar phrase signifying the persons that form a party.

**PUSS.** It is a childish pet name for the cat, as "bow-wow" is for a dog. Probably this word is an imitation of the sound made by a cat's spitting, but it is peculiar to know that this word puss or pussy is found in almost identical form in Dutch, German, Swedish, Irish and Gaelic, in all of which languages it means a cat.

**PUT.** "To put a down upon a man" (Australian). To inform against him so as to prevent him from committing a robbery or a fraud which he is about to perpetrate. "To put up to." To incite or instigate. I didn't want to do it, but he put me up to it. "To put the pot on" (Turf). To bet heavily upon a horse. "Put up." Betrayal. *New York Slang Dictionary* explains this phrase thus:—"This refers to information given to thieves by persons in the employment of parties to be robbed, such as servants, clerks, porters, &c., whereby the thief is facilitated in his operations. A job is said to be put up if the porter of a store should allow a "fitter" to take an impression of the keys of the door of a safe; or when a clerk sent to the bank to make a deposit, or to draw money, allows himself to be thrown down and robbed, in order to have his pocket picked." It is in this sense that Dickens uses "put up" in *Oliver Twist*, and not in that of obtaining information. "To put up the price." When two persons bid against each other at an auction, they are said to put up the price which naturally goes high. "To put off." It has two significations (a) to postpone, as "Don't

put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day," (b) to get rid of by temporising as "I put him off with promises." "To put by." To neglect. In his Ode on *The Intimations of Immortality* Wordsworth says "A presence which is not to be put by." It is also used in the sense of "to lay by" or to save, as "We must put by (lay by) for a rainy day." "Put out." To put out a fire is to extinguish it. When a person is annoyed and loses his temper, he is said to be very much put out. "To put down in black and white." To put a thing down in writing usually as a guarantee. "To put one's shoulder to the wheel." To help oneself without looking elsewhere for help. The reference is to the waggoner who called upon Hercules to help him when his waggon stuck in the mud, and to the answer which Hercules made:—"Put your own shoulder to the wheel, and lift it out." "To put one out of countenance." To make one feel ashamed of oneself. "To put the shoe on the right foot." Figuratively it means to lay the blame where it is rightly due. "Putting one's foot in it." Doing something unconsciously which one ought not to do and causing temporary ill-feeling.

**PUTNEY.** Oh, go to Putney. Putney like Jericho and Ballyhock is a modified appellation for "the place of eternal punishment," so literally it means "go to the devil." Sometimes one hears the expression "Go to Putney on a pig."

**PUZZLE.** In Middle English, puzzle was *opposaille*, meaning something put before one, and this sense is still retained in the word "poser" for puzzle.

**PYAH.** Sailors use this word in the sense of paltry or weak. It is really a corruption of the Indian word "pariah" applied to the submerged classes.

## Q.

**QUACK.** Some believe it to be a corruption of "quake" "with a supposed ability to charm away ague." Others think that this word as applied to a medical practitioner not fully qualified as a doctor has a reference to the loud quacking of the domesticated chick. Quack doctor. One not qualified as a doctor with the recognised degree. It is commonly applied to sham doctors extracting fees from credulous patients.

**QUADRUPED, QUADRUPLE.** A quadruped is a four-footed animal; quadruple is four-fold (four times). A horse is a quadruped. In the game of bridge, players can double, treble and quadruple.

**QUAGMIRE.** It is a corruption of quackmire which means soft marshy ground that quakes and shakes and yields to

the pressure of the foot. Note that "quicksand" denotes moving or shifting sandbanks.

**QUAINT.** This word which now means odd or curious, some centuries ago signified a great many things, and stood for various adjectives in a good sense.

**QUAKERS.** A nickname for the "Society of Friends," founded by George Fox. This contemptuous term was originally applied by a magistrate to the members of the society, because George Fox who was committed to prison by the magistrate told the latter to quake at the word of the Lord.

**QUALIFY.** To qualify a statement or opinion is to modify it, i.e. make it less sweeping or absolute. To qualify whisky or brandy is to diminish its strength or flavour by adding water to it. Qualified praise is literally modified praise, that is, a restricted praise. To say that Tennyson would have been the greatest poet of England if there had been no Shakespeare is to give the former qualified praise. The opposite of this is unqualified praise. An unqualified apology, that is, an absolute apology is the one that satisfies the person to whom it is made.

**QUANDARY.** This is a corrupted form of the French *qu'en dirai-je?* meaning "What shall I say of it?" This in itself denotes a puzzle or perplexity. Originally it meant a morbid state of mind. According to Skeat, it probably arose from *condarye* for *hypo-conderye*, a morbid state of mind.

**QUANTUM MERUIT** (Latin). As much as he has earned. When a person has done work for or rendered services to another, and no price has been fixed or agreed, the court or jury, as the case may be, assess the value at a reasonable rate of remuneration on the supposition that this was the intention of the parties. The value thus assessed is called a *quantum meruit* for work and services.

**QUARANTINE.** It originally meant the forty days that a ship, suspected of having a contagious disease on board, was compelled to lie off port. Now it is not limited to any length of time. It comes from the Latin *quadragesima* meaning forty.

**QUARREL.** It comes from the Latin *queri*, to complain, and there can be no quarrel without some cause of complaint. From the same source we have two different words querimonious and querulous, both meaning fretful, complaining, peevish. Querulous should not be confused with quarrellous which means quarrelsome. Shakespeare has the word quarrellous. To quarrel with your bread and butter. To act to one's own disadvantage. It literally means to abandon employment by which one lives.

**QUARRY.** This word has two meanings. When it means the excavation from which stone is extracted, it comes from the

Latin *quadrus*, square, hence, literally it signifies a place where stone is squared. When it is applied to game or anything else for food, as "quarry of the chase," it comes from the old French *cuirdee*, signifying the intestines of an animal killed in a chase. Hence, it came to be applied to the object itself.

**QUART, QUARTAN.** Quart is the fourth part of a gallon; quartan is that which recurs every fourth day, as a quartan fever. The former is always a noun, while the latter is both an adjective and a noun, although Dr. Annandale in his *Concise English Dictionary* gives the latter only as an adjective. When we say a quartan of whisky, we mean one-fourth part of a full bottle of whisky, and this phrase is heard every day in England. "Quart-pot-tea." (Australian.) The Irish use this phrase for tea made in the bush; really the proper way to make it. A tin containing a quart of water is set down by the fire, and when it boils, a handful of tea is put in, and the pot at once removed from the fire.

**QUARTERS.** This comes from the French word *écarter* meaning to set apart and this literal sense is retained in the meaning of the word. A soldier's quarters are a soldier's apartments. As a rule, dictionaries give the Latin *quartus*, a fourth, as its derivation, but the other seems more probable. A "quarter-deck" has nothing to do with the fourth part of a ship, because it means a deck set apart in a man-of-war for the officers.

**QUASI.** This Latin word means "as if." It is hyphenated especially to noun or adjective implying that what it qualifies is not real or only has certain features of what it professes to be. It is used in the sense of half or almost, as a quasi-contract, a quasi-argument, a quasi-historical account.

**QUEAN.** Impudent or ill-behaved girl. Hussy as they call her in England.

**QUEEN.** This word is cognate with the Sanskrit *jani*, and has the same root as *genus*, *kin*, &c., and it simply means a woman. The word "quean" comes from the same root, but it is now applied to a woman of worthless character. Originally it signified a young woman without any bad reference to her character, and in Scotland it is still used in that sense. Thus "queen" only differs in gradation from "quean."

**QUEER.** This word is supposed to have originated at a time when a trader placed the word *quaere* (inquire) opposite the names of those customers whose solvency he doubted. It is still used in that sense, for instance, a man in "queer street" is one who is in debt or is of doubtful solvency. In old cant "queer" means anything counterfeit or illegal and in this sense the word is allied to the German *quor* meaning contrary to, across. Hence the expressions "queer

bit" and "queer money" mean spurious coin. "Queer soft" signifies bad notes. "Queer fish." Eccentric person. "Queer street." A slang term for the pretended whereabouts of a person of a shady character.

**QUEUE.** It is a French word meaning a tail, hence, literally it signifies hanging plaited tail of hair. From this its application to a line of persons standing outside a theatre in a row, awaiting their turn to be admitted inside, and to a line of vehicles standing in a row and waiting to proceed is quite appropriate. Persons and vehicles, waiting in this manner one behind the other, form a sort of hanging tail, as it were.

**QUI.** To give a man the "qui" is to give him notice to quit, "qui" here being a contracted form of *quietus* meaning discharge.

**QUIBBLE.** A quibble is a prevarication and this word which is a diminutive of "quib" comes from the Welsh *chwip*, a sharp turn. It is usually by a quick turn of thought that a person prevaricates.

**QUICK.** Originally it meant life or living, coming as it does from the Sanskrit root *jiv* meaning to live. This sense is still retained in the phrase "cut to the quick," the vital part of the body. The Bible speaks of the quick (living) and dead.

**QUID.** (Slang.) Sovereign. Very few people in England while talking to each other use the word pound. They always use the word quid for pound. "Quid of tobacco." Here quid is a corruption of cud meaning a morsel. We still use the expression "chewing the cud." "*Quid rides*." This Latin expression literally means "why do you laugh?" A Dublin tobacconist, Mr. Lundy Foot, made a large fortune and wanting to buy a carriage, asked his friends to suggest a motto. The one suggested was "*Quid Rides*," quid in the sense of tobacconist. When people saw him parading himself in this manner, they laughed at him, but he was under the impression that they did so because the motto meant "Why do you laugh?"

**QUIDDITY.** It comes from the Latin *quid* meaning "what?" and means "what-ness," "characteristic quality." The term originated with mediæval schoolmen and is used for "quibble," in the sense of captious subtlety.

**QUID PRO QUO.** (Latin.) Literally it means "what for what," something in return, an equivalent, tit for tat, a Roland for an Oliver. (See "to give Roland for an Oliver.")

**QUIÉTUS.** Acquittance, receipt given on payment of account, &c. Now it is rarely used in this sense. The present mean-

ing is a release from life; death or extinction. In his famous soliloquy, Hamlet says:—

“When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin?”

**QUILL-DRIVER.** Literally one who drives the quill, hence, a writer. It is also applied to a bookmaker.

**QUINSY.** It comes from two Greek words signifying the dog-throttling, hence it means an abscess on the tonsils, accompanied with a suffocating sensation.

**QUINTESENCE.** Its literal meaning is the fifth sense. The ancient Greeks admitted four elements only—earth, air, fire and water, and to this the Pythagoreans added a fifth which they called ether—an element so pure and subtle that it flew upwards at creation and out of it the stars were made. Hence the word in its figurative sense means the highest essence, *e.g.* He is the quintessence of wisdom.

**QUIT.** This is an abbreviation of the word “quiet,” and those who quit themselves of their debts and obligations acquit themselves and naturally have a feeling of peace and quiet.

**QUIT, CEASE.** Quit comes from the Latin *quietus*, meaning rest, and signifies to rest, or to give up the hold of. So, we quit that to which we return no more. Cease comes from the Latin *cesso* and signifies to put an end to. We may cease from doing a thing for the time being and may return to it in the course of time.

**QUITE.** “Quite the lady.” A vulgar expression for one whose behaviour is that of a lady born and bred (very lady-like). “Quite so.” When you agree with a person, you say “quite so” in the sense of “Oh, yes,” but this expression is not particularly desirable. “Quite too nice.” This society expression as applied to a gentleman who wears long hair and black velvet coat and who dabbles in art, means very much the same as “awfully jolly.”

**QUI VIVE.** A French term which literally means who lives, but in England it is equivalent to “who goes there?” being the challenge of a sentinel. To be on the “qui vive” means to be on the alert like a sentinel.

**QUIXOTIC.** Don Quixote, the hero of the novel of that name by Cervantes, indulges in all sorts of foolish and whimsical feats of gallantry, and hence, the adjective. “A quixotic project” is one which is foolish and unrealisable. “A quixotic individual.” A romantic and chivalrous person, but stupid and wanting in common sense. “Quixotic sentiments.” Foolish sentiments.

**QUIZ.** Something without any meaning at all and yet exciting people’s curiosity. The word originated in a joke. Daly,

the manager of a Dublin theatre, laid a wager that within twenty-four hours he would introduce into the language a word of no meaning. So the four letters Q U I Z were chalked up on walls and other available places. It set the town enquiring what it meant, and hence the word became current.

**QUIZ.** (Legal.) The name given to a weekly examination among the American law students, and it means coaching. Hence "quiz-class," "quiz-master," "legal quiz." As a verb (a) to attend, (b) to conduct such a class.

**QUOD.** This is a corruption of "quad" which is a contraction of quadrangle. "To be in quod or quad" means in the slang language to be in prison, literally meaning to be confined to one's quadrangle or college grounds.

**QUONDAM.** (Anglicised Latin.) It signifies "formerly." In English it is used in the sense of "some time." Dryden uses the phrase "my quondam barber" meaning my sometime barber. The familiar expressions are "my quondam friend" and "my quondam school fellow."

**QUORUM.** This Latin word literally means of whom (a certain number). The minimum number of persons who are necessary to constitute a meeting duly authorised to act in the name of the whole body.

**QUOTA.** This Latin term means the allotted portion, and it comes from the Latin *quotus*, how great, and *quot*, how many. The word "quote" comes from the same root and literally means say how many.

**QUOTH.** It is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *civendhan*, to speak, and it has two peculiar characteristics worth noting. The first is that it always precedes the nominative and the second is that it is used only in the first and third persons thus: "quoth I" and "quoth he."

## R.

**RABBIT.** "As thin as a sixpenny rabbit." Extremely thin, as applied to a person.

**RABBLE.** The Low German *rabble* means to chatter, babble, and from the noise made by a crowd, the word is applied to the crowd itself. Hence it means the mob.

**RACK.** This word has various meanings. In the sense of an instrument for torture, it is probably derived from the Middle Dutch *racken*, to torture. It also means a mist or light vapoury clouds, and Shakespeare thus uses it in *Hamlet*. In the phrase "to go to rack and ruin" the word

**rack** is the same as "wrack." When it is used in the sense of a neck of mutton, it is cognate with the Anglo-Saxon *hracca*, meaning the back of the head. As a verb, as applied to liquor, it signifies "to clear liquor from dregs."

**RACKET.** This word, which originally meant in England a dodge, manoeuvre, is often used in America even now in that sense. It also means noise, the allusion being to the noise produced by persons playing racket or tennis. Brighton is as full of noise and racket as London is. "To stand the racket." To stand or take the consequences. "To be on the racket." To spend one's time in dissipation.

**RADICALS.** It comes from the Latin word *radix*, meaning a root and denotes that those who are radicals seek to bring about reforms by striking at the root. In England Radicals are ultra-Liberals, and the term, as applied to a political party came into use in 1818, when Henry Hunt, Major Cartwright and others of the same clique sought to bring about a Radical reform in Parliament. The democratic party in England which holds extreme views with regard to the religious and civil liberty of the people consists of Radicals.

**RAG.** This is one of those words which are used in different senses in different countries. At English universities it is used to signify to annoy, hustle. At American universities, a student who beats his class-mates in composition is said to rag all his competitors. At the English universities it is also used for a rowdy time, as, after dinner the undergraduates had a rag. It is also used for rubbish or of no account, *e.g.*, it is a rag of a paper, or, it is a twopenny-halfpenny rag of a paper. It also means a tatter, hence a remnant, and is figuratively used for vagabond. Shakespeare has it in the sense of a vagabond in *Richard III.* "Rag-bushes." Pilgrims visiting sacred wells in the hope of curing their physical and moral evils are in the habit of hanging rags on the bushes near at hand and hence they are so called. "Ragtime." This refers to the irregular time observed in the popular music of American coon songs, cake walks, &c. It is a kind of dance.

**RAGAMUFFIN.** A poor ragged fellow. It is, undoubtedly, connected with the word "rag." In the miracle play a devil appears in the name of Raggamofin, who is described as ragged, that is, shaggy in appearance.

**RAIL.** Liar. It is an example of bad slang. "You are a rail backward." You are a liar. A similar expression is "you are fifty-one (11) ar." "To sit on the rail." It is an American phrase in which "the rail" means "the fence." To sit on the rail is to sit on one side, hence, figuratively to hedge or to fence; to evade giving a direct answer by shuffling it.



**RAILWAY.** It is a compound of Rail and Way, that is, a way formed by rails.

**RAIMENT.** This is short for *arraiment*. Array literally means to get ready.

**RAIN.** "Raining cats and dogs." Three good guesses are made regarding the origin of this phrase. *Notes and Queries* gives us the following story:—The male blossoms of the willow tree, which are used on Palm Sunday to represent the branches of palms are called "cats and dogs" in many parts of the country. They increase in size rapidly after a few warm April showers, and the belief formerly prevailed that the rain brought them. Hence the saying "to rain cats and dogs." The second derivation is ascribed to the French word *catadoupe*, a water fall. The third explanation is that in Northern mythology the cat was credited with having a great influence on the weather and the dog was the signal of wind. Hence both working together brought down torrents of rain with gusts of wind. "Rain napper": (popular). An umbrella. To nap means to take, receive. "Rainy day." It means evil times. The expression "to lay by something for a rainy day" means to save something against evil times. A rainy day is really a hopeless day, because it pours all day without any hope of sunshine, and therefore, it is always prudent to provide one's self against such a contingency.

**RAISE.** "Raise the wind" (nautical). Metaphorically it means to obtain money by fair or foul means. Wind is as essential to sailors as money is to traders.

**RAKISH HATS.** (Colloquial.) "The soft felt and plush hats worn in a rakish manner, with the brim turned down in front and up at the back"—*London Opinion*, 1914.

**RAM.** The prize which a fighter in a wrestling match carries off is called a ram. In *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer says "At wrastlyng he wolde bere away the ram."

**RAMP.** "On the ramp." In a wild, excited, state. This word is cognate with "romp."

**RAMSHACKLE.** This word is a corrupted form of ramshatter, or possibly from ransack, and it literally means shattered as with a battering ram. Standing corn is said to be ramshackled i.e. knocked about, after a high wind.

**RANK OUTSIDER.** This is originally a racing term applied to a horse outside the rank, and nothing is so annoying to a backer or so pleasing to a bookmaker as the winning of a rank outsider. The term is also applied to a vulgar fellow, a cad.

**RANSACK.** The English language takes this word from the Icelandic *ramsaka* from *rann*, a house, and *soekja*, to seek.

Almost all the Northern languages have similar words, all signifying searching or scrutinising.

**RAP.** "Not worth a rap." One supposition is that this expression owes its origin to the fact that some years ago counterfeited halfpence were current in Ireland, and were known as "raps." Hence the slang phrase "not worth a rap" literally means not worth even a bad half-penny. The other supposition is that this expression comes from the letters R.A.P., meaning rupees, annas, and pies, which is Indian money just as £. S. D. represents English money. "To rap out." To burst out vehemently. Generally, the whole phrase is "to rap out an oath at one." "To rap over the knuckles." To give one a sharp reproach. The phrase "to rap one's knuckles" is also used as "the critics rapped the author's knuckles for writing an atrocious book."

**RARA AVIS.** Literally rare bird. Something seldom seen. An Indian gentleman wearing turban is a *rara avis* in London.

**RAT.** "I smell a rat." I smell a secret; I know what it is. "He has got the rats." He is in a sulky mood, or, he is in terrible tantrums. Similar expressions are "He has got the hump," "he has got the needle."

**RATH.** It means early, and rather means sooner, being the comparative of "rath."

**RATHER.** This word is often used as an answer to a question in the sense of "yes," "certainly." When asked if he likes music, a person says "rather."

**RATIONAL, REASONABLE.** Rational signifies the possession of reason, while reasonable signifies the habitual use of reason. Man is a rational animal, but he may not necessarily be a reasonable being.

**READ.** This word in its original sense of "interpret" or "guess" is still used in the phrase "to read a riddle." The word riddle itself is derived from the same verb.

**REAP.** "Reaping the whirlwind." Doing rash acts and suffering the evil results therefrom.

**RECEIPT, RECIPE.** A receipt is a written or printed direction for compounding or mixing certain ingredients. It also means a written discharge for the payment of a debt. "Recipe" is a medical term and it is Latin for "take" and is contracted into "R." It is used as a prefix in doctors' prescriptions.

**RECREANT.** Two origins are ascribed to this word. Dr. Brewer says that it comes from the French *récrier*, one who cries out; the allusion being to the crying out for mercy on the part of a person who wanted to confess and surrender in a judicial court and hence was considered a coward. Other

etymologists derive the word from the Low Latin *recrēdere*, to believe again, though now it is not used in that sense.

**RECTOR.** It is derived from the Latin *rectus*, the past participle of *regere*, to rule, and it literally means one who rules. The rector in the Church of England receives the tithes from the parish for which he is clergyman, whereas the vicar possesses no such rights.

**RED.** "Red-letter day." A term signifying an auspicious or lucky day. It is so called because the saints' days were marked with red letters in the old calendars. "Red tape." A reproachful term applied to the too rigid adherence to strict rules. In Government offices official documents are tied up with red tape, and they go through formalities thus delaying speedy action. "Red herring" (political). Any minor point which is particularly emphasised at the expense of greater points with a view to gain the desired object, that minor point is called the "red herring." "To draw a red herring across the track." To divert attention from the point in question by starting irrelevant but exciting question, the reference being to the use of red herring in exercising hounds.

**REFECTORY.** The apartment in a monastery where monks took their meals used to be called by that name. But the Americans have degraded the word by applying it to the restaurant.

**REFERENCE.** In law the submission of a matter in dispute to an arbitrator for his award is called "reference."

**REFRESHERS.** (Legal.) Fees which a counsel receives for each day's hearing in case the trial lasts longer than a day. This is in addition to what he gets for accepting a brief. "The 'refresher' originally meant that the lawyer was expected to refresh his memory from time to time as to the facts of the case before him." The word is colloquially used for a drink.

**REGALIA.** It means royal adornments. In England the crown, the royal sceptre, the verge, or rod with the dove, St. Edward's staff, the orb or mound, the sword of mercy &c. &c. &c. are called regalia.

**REGATTA.** An annual public diversion at Venice of which boat-racing is the only feature. It has been introduced into England also.

**REGRET.** In America they use it as a substantive, and instead of saying "I regret to say that I cannot avail myself of your invitation" they usually say "I must send a regret." In England, too, one sometimes hears it used in that sense.

**RELATION, RELATIVE, KINSMAN.** A relation or a relative is one who is related to another by ties of blood or by law. Thus, a brother is a relative or relation by ties of

blood, whereas a brother-in-law is such by law. "Relative" really an adjective is used as a noun, and relation is used in a concrete sense. A kinsman is properly, as the word shows, a "man's kin" *i.e.* one of his own blood, as a brother.

**RELIGIOUS.** As a noun it means a Roman Catholic who has taken monastic vows.

**RELISH.** It comes from the French *relâcher* meaning to lick anew. A relish of a thing is the actual taste itself, while a relish for a thing is disposition to taste.

**REMARKABLE, EXTRAORDINARY.** Remarkable is that which is worthy of remark; extraordinary is that which is outside the ordinary run of things, as the word itself implies.

**REMIT, SEND.** To remit is "to send or place back" and hence to remit is to send payment for the discharge of an account. Remit implies discharge of obligation, and when once the payment has been sent, both parties stand to each other in the same relation as they did before any obligation was incurred. It should not be used in the sense of "sending," where there is no obligation on the part of the sender. It is more or less a commercial term.

**REMITTANCE MEN.** People in the colonies who do not work to earn their living but live on allowances sent to them from home are derisively spoken of as "remittance men."

**RENDEZVOUS.** This French word literally means "betake yourselves," and hence it is applied to a place appointed for the assembling of troops or ships, and also to a place of common resort, or to a meeting place agreed upon. "Our rendezvous this afternoon is the Lincoln's Inn."

**RENEGADE, RENEGADO.** The Spanish word "renegado" was taken into the English language bodily, which means an apostate, *i.e.* one who has denied the faith. The word "renegade" followed "renegado," and comes from the Latin *renegatus*, *re*, again, *negare*, to deny, hence one who has denied his faith. The word runagate is the same thing, and it comes from the French *renegate*, but the popular etymology has corrupted it, as if it meant "runaway," and came from run and gate, a way.

**REPAIR.** Strictly speaking, this word in the sense of moving means to return home, coming as it does from the Latin *repatriare*, to go back to one's fatherland. By a stretch of imagination, a soldier may be said to repair to his barracks, but it would be hardly justifiable to say that a soldier repaired to his friend's house.

**REPLY.** It comes from the Latin *replicare*, meaning to turn back. We use this word in the sense of answer, but it really means an answer to an answer. A writes a letter

which B answers asking another question or two, and A gives a reply.

**REQUEST.** One of the meanings of this word is "to go again in quest of." As an old hunting phrase it means to set hounds again on the last scent.

**REQUIEM.** A funeral composition, so called from the first word of a prayer in a Roman Catholic Mass for the dead, "*Requiem æternum dona eis, Domine*" meaning "Give eternal rest to them, Lord."—Brand.

**REQUISITE, REQUIREMENT, REQUISITION.** A requisite is that which is absolutely essential and cannot be dispensed with, as, breathing is a requisite of life. "Requirement" is rather that which is insisted on, if desired conditions are to be fulfilled, as, the apology you ask is a hard requirement. When a requirement is made a sort of public or legal demand, it becomes a requisition, as a requisition for accounts.

**REQUITE, REPAY, RETALIATE.** Requite comes from the Latin *quies* (quiet), so that when one pays up his creditor and cries quits, one has, so to say, "brought him to quiet." Repay comes from the Latin *pax*, peace, so that when one pays up the money that is owing, one "brings him to peace." Thus it will be seen that the idea of peace underlies both these words. Retaliate was not used in the modern sense of revenge in former times, coming as it does from the word *talio*, payment in kind. Formerly one could retaliate a kindness or a visit.

**RESIDE, LIVE.** Reside is a stately word. "Where does he live?" does not really signify the same as "Where does he reside?" as a man may be living in a cheap lodging-house, and "residing" always conveys the idea of living in a big house.

**RESIDENCE, HOUSE, DOMICILE.** Residence is a big word. House is sometimes used in the sense of family, as "The House of Marlborough." Domicile is the place of abode by adoption from the legal point of view.

**RESOURCE, RESOURCES.** When used in the plural this word always signifies some concrete source of aid, as, for instance, pecuniary means. When used to denote "mental capacity to find expedients" it is always singular.

**RESTIVE.** This word has nothing to do with rest, meaning quiet. On the other hand "restive" means resistive, hence obstinate or self-willed like a restive horse. Properly speaking, it should be "resistive," coming as it does from the verb to resist. The middle syllable was omitted, and it became "restive." Colloquially it is used in the sense of fidgety.

**RETAIL.** To tell to many. Their sayings and doings were retailed everywhere.

**RETARD, DELAY.** Retard is always transitive, delay may be either transitive or intransitive. Retard properly means "to make a thing go slow," coming as it does from *re*, intensive, and *tardum*, slow. Delay is a compound of *de* and *lay* signifying to lay or keep back.

**RETIRACY.** In America a man who has made his pile (fortune) is said to have secured a retiracy, *i.e.* sufficient to retire upon.

**RETURN.** "Return to our muttons." Come back to the original point. When a speaker or a writer after having digressed wants to come back to the original point, he usually says, "Now to return to our muttons."

**REVENGE.** This word is cognate with "wreak" which is connected with its verb "to reck." "Reck" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wreccan*, to pursue, to avenge, and "to wreak vengeance on" is literally "to revenge one's vengeance on" which is really a pleonasm. "To wreak vengeance on" in itself means "to revenge."

**REVEREND, REVERENT.** "It seems astonishing that many of our writers should not yet be clear in their distinctive use of 'reverend.' I saw lately a description of a certain person as being 'unintentionally irreverend.' The writer (or printer) of this forgot that 'reverent'—*reverens, entis*—is the subjective word, describing the feeling within a man as its subject, whereas 'reverend' (*reverendus*) is the objective word, describing the feeling with which a man is regarded—of which he is the object from without. Dean Swift might be 'very reverend,' by common courtesy; but he was certainly not 'very reverent' in his conduct or in his writings."—Alford, *The Queen's English*.

**REVOKE.** This word comes from Latin *renegare* which is used in the sense of deny. To revoke at cards means to *renegare* which is oftentimes shortened to *nig*. It means to hold in your hands the card of the suit asked for and not to play it.

**REVOLTS.** The use of this verb in the transitive sense as in the expression "this revolts me" is condemned. "This is revolting to me" is a better expression.

**REVUE.** This French word has been introduced into the English language recently, and it is generally used in connection with theatrical sketches. I have seen this word often used in the *London Mail* in the sense of a review of public events.

**RHETORIC.** Originally it signified public oratory, but now

it is applied to eloquence spoken or written. It comes from the Greek *rhetor*, an orator.

**RHETORIC, ELOQUENCE.** Rhetoric is the art of using persuasive language mainly acquired from the study of books and literature; eloquence belongs to the platform. De Quincy says "By eloquence we understand the overflow of powerful feelings upon occasions fitted to excite them." Rhetoric is an art acquired, eloquence is more in the nature of a gift.

**RICE.** From time immemorial human beings must have been "living on rice and even now a large number of the human race support themselves on this grain. In various languages the word is similar."

**RICKSHAW.** This is a recognised colloquialism for "jinrickshaw," just as sweets for sweetmeats, cycle for bicycle, sport for sportsman, &c. It is a light two-wheeled vehicle with a hood, drawn by men. It was first used in Japan in 1870 and is a Japanese term, "jin," man, "r'ki," power, and "shaw," vehicle; literally a vehicle drawn by man-power.

**RICOCHET WORDS.** Reduplicated words such as hurly-burly, riff-raff, tittle-tattle, etc., are so called. This term is also applied to rhyming.

**RIDDLE.** This is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *raedelse* from *raedan* meaning to read, to interpret. Anything which is difficult of interpretation is a riddle.

**RIDING, DRIVING.** Although riding conveys the idea of riding on horseback, and driving that of driving in a carriage, it may be observed that "ride" is not limited in its application. A "road" is a broad path in which people may "ride" on horses or in vehicles, hence we say "to ride in a carriage." No doubt the word "ride" comes from a time when vehicles were unknown, but from centuries ago it has been applied to any kind of locomotion. "To ride the high horse." To give oneself airs; to be overbearing and arrogant. But Dr. Brewer in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* says "the present use of the phrase 'to be at one's high jinks' expresses the idea of uproarious fun and jollity." "To be on the high ropes" is also another expression which means to ride the high horse. But it also means to be angry or excited, though commonly it is used in the former sense.

**RIFF-RAFF.** The Middle English terms according to Skeat were "rif and raf." *Rief*, the Anglo-Saxon word, means a rag and *raff*, the Anglo-Saxon word, means sweepings. Hence the term "riff-raff" came to denote mere refuse and rubbish, and is now figuratively applied to the worthless members of society.

**RIGHT.** "It is all right, or it is quite all right." When a person happens to tread on your toe and says "I beg your pardon," it is only polite to answer "It is quite all right." It would not be polite to say "Don't mention it," for sometimes this phrase is used ironically. "Don't mention it" may be used as an answer to "I thank you," but it is better to acknowledge "Thank you" with a bow. "Right ho!" It is used very much in the same sense as right you are. "Right you are." This is a colloquial phrase always used in answer to something. It is a more emphatic way of saying "all right," and it shows an entire acquiescence in what has been said. When a friend asks you to dine with him, and if you are quite agreeable, you say "Right you are." "Right up to the handle" (American). Thoroughly; excellent. He is a jolly good fellow right up to the handle. "Right as rain." Quite right. (See right as ninepence.) This expression is in common use in England. "Right royal." Slangily used for "drunk." This expression is otherwise used in a very laudable sense, as "He treated me in a right royal fashion." "To set to rights." To put in order. "To rise on the right side of the bed." A happy omen for the person who does so. He passes the day happily without fretting or losing his temper. The unhappy omen is "getting out of the wrong side of the bed." As a rule women are more fond of using the latter expression than men. "Right away, right off." Both are colloquially used for "instantly," "at once." "Right as nine penec." Quite right; exactly right. Nine pence in this phrase is a corruption of nine-pins. "This most undoubtedly should be nine-pins, for in a game of that name, in fairness to both parties, the nine pins must

always be set up, with great accuracy, in this form . . .

There is nonicety in nine pence." A similar expression is "right as rain."

**RIGHTS, PRIVILEGE, PREROGATIVE.** Right has a wider significance. Privilege is "species of right peculiar to particular individuals or bodies. It is a compound of the Latin words *privus*, and *lex*, signifying law made for an individual or individuals, and its application is explained in the root itself. Prerogative is the right of determining or choosing first in many particulars," for instance, prerogatives of a king. The use of the word right as a noun in the sense of "Just cause to expect," or, as a verb for "deserve" is not favoured. "He has a right to be punished" is not so correct or elegant as "He deserved to be punished."

**RIGHTEOUS.** This sometimes used to be written "ryghtwys," a compound of "right" and "wise," and it comes from the Latin *rectus*, past participle of *regere*, to direct, to



rule, as a straight line is ruled. A righteous man is one who adopts a straight path in life, and does not go astray from it.

**RIGMAROLE.** An unnecessarily lengthy and winding statement of anything; twaddle. It is used both as a noun and as an adjective. As an adjective it means roundabout or nonsensical. It is a corruption of "Ragman roll," that is, the devil's roll. Rage-man is applied to a document containing many unnecessary details.

**RILE.** (Colloquial.) This word is pronounced ril, and means to stir to anger; to irritate. It is the principle of the thing that gets me riled. Lots of dictionaries give its pronunciation as its spelling suggests.

**RIMBLE-RAMBLE.** It is a reduplicated form of ramble and it means nonsense. A person rambling or wandering in his mind talks nonsense.

**RING.** "To ring one's own bell." Another equivalent phrase is "to blow one's own trumpet."

**RIP.** A rake, a libertine, being a corruption of reprobate. A person reading the letters R.I.P. (*Requiescat in pace*) on the top of a tombstone as one word, said, soliloquising, "Rip! Well, he was an old rip, and no mistake."—Cuthbert Bede.

**RIPPER.** A slang term for a fine woman. This word is applied to anyone or anything superlatively good. A very good fellow, a good play, a fast horse, may be called a ripper. It comes from "to rip," to go at a great pace. The reference is to an association of ideas between speed and excellence. Ripping means jolly and nice, in such expressions as "We had quite a ripping time," "A ripping dinner," "A ripping play."

**RISE.** It is commonly used in the sense of an advance in salary, as "He got a rise this month." "To take a rise out of a person." To cheat or outwit a person by superior cunning. This metaphor is taken from fly-fishing, fish being silly enough "to rise" to be caught by an artificial fly. Hence, *To Freshmen*, Oxford, 1843, says "There is only one thing, and fortunately, of which Oxford men are economical, and that is their University experience. They not only think it fair that Freshmen should go through their ordeal unaided, but many have a sweet satisfaction in their distresses, and even busy themselves in obtaining elevations, or, as it is vulgarly termed, in getting rises 'out of them.'" "To rise (or raise) a barney." To collect a mob or crowd. A term used by patterers.

**ROADSTER.** It properly means horse, bicycle, &c., for use on the road. But it is figuratively applied to an experienced traveller.

**ROAMERS.** Roamers are those who go to Rome to see the Pope. It is no doubt a queer origin of the word roamer, but it is true.

**ROARING TRADE.** A very successful business, yielding large profits. A roaring trade requires no booming, but in order to make it such it wants booming.

**ROAST.** To ridicule. A person is said to be roasted, when he is ridiculed by the whole company. Quizzing is done by one person only.

**ROBUST.** This comes from the Latin *robur*, the oak, "Strong as an oak."

**ROCKED.** "He is half-rocked." He is half-witted.

**RODOMONTADE.** Literally means "one who rolls away mountains." "Rodomont" was a character in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, two famous Italian poems. Rodomont is depicted as a very brave knight, but given to much boasting at the same time. Hence "rodomontade" means idle bragging and blustering.

**ROLAND.** "To give a Roland for an Oliver." Rowland and Oliver were two of the most famous in the list of Charlemagne's twelve peers, and their exploits are recorded so ridiculously and extravagantly by the old romances that from thence arose that saying amongst plain and sensible ancestors of giving one "a Rowland for an Oliver," to signify the matching of one incredible lie with another.—Warburton. "Never argue with an interrupter. If you don't think you can give him a Roland for an Oliver in the shape of a short, sharp retort, let the interruption go unnoticed."—The Rt. Hon. D. J. Macnamara.

**ROMAN.** "A Roman fall." A walk in which the head is thrown well forward and the small of the back well in. "Roman nose." A nose with a high bridge (of a person) is so called.

**ROMANCE.** Somewhere about the ninth century France ceased to speak Latin and introduced the mixed language of the Franks and bad Latin, which was called the Romance language. The early tales of chivalry were written in that language and were called "Romances." Hence any story or poem which is half-fabulous is described as a romance.

**ROORBACK.** A term applied to a big yarn, is taken from the name of Baron Roorback, who published tales of adventure in the early part of the nineteenth century. Hence the name has become a synonym for any large fictitious story.

**ROOST.** A dwelling, resting place. This word is synonymous with perch. "I am going to roost," is equivalent to "I am off to perch," that is, I am going to bed.

**ROPE.** "Give a rogue rope enough and he will hang himself." This colloquial phrase means that a wicked man is even-

tually sure to cause his own destruction. "A rope of sand." As a rope cannot be made of sand, the expression signifies that which appears to be strong but can be easily broken. "To know the ropes." To be up to all the dodges and tricks of the sporting world. The ropes here mean the reins, as in the phrase "To rope a horse." "He is on his high ropes." He is in a haughty temper. The allusion is to a dancer who looks down on the spectators. A similar expression is "To be on one's high horse," (which see).

**ROSTRUM.** A pulpit. It comes from the Latin *rodo*, to gnaw, and literally it means the beak of a bird or of a ship. Milne in his *A Readable English Dictionary* says "When the Romans took the seaport of Autrium, they carried the beaks of the vessels to Rome and placed them in the forum, in front of the place from which the orators addressed the people. Hence to mount the rostrum means to mount an appointed place for speaking."

**ROT (or ALL ROT).** Nonsense; anything bad, disagreeable, or useless. It is a favourite schoolboy's phrase in England. "Rotter." A person who is not particularly scrupulous. He is a rotter.

**ROTTEN ROW.** The name of the fashionable riding and driving resort in Hyde Park. It is simply a corruption of the French phrase *route de roi* meaning the king's road or the king's passage-way. Dr. Brewer in his *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* gives three other derivations of "Rotten Row," but the one given above has the acceptance of most authorities.

**ROUGH.** Bad or stinking, as rough fish. 'A rough is a vulgar, low man. "Rough and ready." At the Battle of Waterloo Colonel Rough was elected by the Duke of Wellington to perform some service requiring energy and promptitude. "Rough and ready," said the Duke when the Colonel cheerfully undertook the duty; and the Colonel thenceforth adopted the words as a motto, which is still borne by his family.—*Words, Facts, and Phrases.*

**ROUGH-HEW.**

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will."

"Dr. Farmer informed Mr. Steevens that the phrase as used by Shakespeare is technical. A woolman, butcher, and dealer in skewers lately observed to him—Dr. Farmer—that his nephew, an idle lad, could only assist him in making them (skewers); he could rough-hew them, but he could not shape their ends."—Todd.

**ROUND.** "A round peg in the square hole, a square peg in the round hole." This expression when applied to government

officials means the wrong man in the wrong place. Mr. Layard is said to be the author of this expression. The following is an extract from the writings of Bishop Berkeley:—"the world is like a board, with holes in it, and the square men have got into the round holes, and the round into the square." "Round dealing." Honest dealing. "Round sum." A round sum of money is a large sum of money. In its slang sense this word is synonymous with square. "Round heads." This was a term of contempt applied to the adherents of Oliver Cromwell during the reign of Charles the First. It arose from their (such persons) having their hair cut close to the head.

**ROUSE.** This is a contraction of carousal, meaning a drinking bout.

**ROUSING.** This word is used in the sense of large or great, for instance, "a rousing good fire," "a rousing falsehood." "Rouseabout" (Australian). A drudge. A rouseabout is a person who has to take up any job that may turn up and make himself generally useful.

**ROUT.** A large evening party.

**ROW.** A tumult or noisy disturbance. Originally a Cambridge term, it has now become general. At one time it was written rouc, and this indicates the French origin from *roué*, a profligate or disturber of the peace.

**RUB.** "To rub in" (colloquial). To repeat. I have said this before, but I want to rub it in. "There is the rub." That is the difficulty, used by Shakespeare. A rub means a quarrel or impediment. "To rub up." To renew, to refresh, as to rub up one's memory by reading over again the old books upon the subject. A similar expression is "To brush up." "To rub down." A horse is rubbed down, that is, groomed. "Rub it in" (colloquial). When you annoy another by keeping on at anything which is unpleasant for him, he says "Don't rub it in," that is, don't make it harder for me and keep quiet about it. "To rub along." This colloquial expression means to jog along through life, that is, to go through it with difficulty.

**RULE, REGULATION, LAW.** We say "rules of diction." We speak of the club regulations. The word law is the widest and largest of the terms, while regulation is the most limited and specific term. "Rule the roast." This is a corruption of "rule the roost," and it means to hold full sway over others, just as the strongest cock becomes master over all the others which roost in the same shed. "Rule of the road." The rule pertaining to the road, viz. "Keep to the right" and "Keep to the left." "Rule of thumb." A rough guess-work without any proper measurement. In

Yorkshire and other places the custom is to dip the thumb in the vat to determine the required heat in brewing.

**RUM.** At one time this was used as a prefix, signifying good, fine, gallant, &c. but now it is used in the sense of indifferent, bad, or questionable, as "What a rum fellow he is." With the exception of Johnson no lexicographer thought it worth while to notice this word, although now it is given a place in dictionaries on account of its frequent use. Johnson gives it as a cant word for a clergyman, but this suggestion has been disputed. "A rum affair." A strange, funny affair. Anything got up by a certain clique and not grasped by others is, as a rule, a rum affair. "A rum customer." A customer whose credit is doubted so far as payment goes. "Rumy girl." A pretty girl.

**RUM.** This word as applied to rum, a liquor, was at one time regarded as a gypsy word.

**RUMBLE.** As noun it means a seat for servants at the back of a carriage, and as verb it means to try, handle, search. A rumbler is a four-wheeled cab.

**RUN.** "A person out of the common run." Such a person is above the common run of men, and hence above the ordinary or the average. "Run of the house." A person having full liberty and free access to the house and the tables has the run of the house. A run of events meaning a series of events, and the run of the house means food and the usual domestic arrangements. In a theatrical sense it means the success of a play, according to the number of performances. "Run a man down." A hunting term, and is used to signify to depreciate or to abuse a man. "Run thin." To start from a bargain. The cask shows itself nearly empty when the liquor in it runs thin. "Run riot." A hunting term meaning to run at a whole herd. Hence it means to run wild. "Run a rig." To run a rig means to play a trick, to suffer a sportive trick. Florio gives as a meaning of rig "the tricks of a wanton"; hence frolicsome and deceptive tricks. The rig of a ship means the way it is rigged, hence its appearance, and, as pirates deceive by changing the rig of their vessel, so it came to mean a trick to deceive, a trick, a frolicsome deception.—*Dr. Brewer.* "Quite out of the running." Not worthy of consideration. A horse which has been scratched is out of the running. "To run to seed." To go to waste. The phrase is taken from the vegetables running to seed, i.e. instead of developing the produce which is their chief value, they shoot up flowers and eventually seeds. If he is allowed to run to seed, all hope of his making a mark will be lost. "To run up." Said of a building which is built in a short time. This big place was run up in one year's time. It is also used in the sense of accumulating, as "Do not let your hills run up." "To run out." To come to an end, as "His

resources have run out." In law we use the expression "the lease has run out." "A run upon a bank." A sudden rush of depositors to the bank to withdraw their money, when there is a rumour of the bank failing. "To run to earth." To run a person to earth is to hunt him and capture him. Ultimately the detective ran the hiding culprit to earth. "To run a business." To own it and keep it going. One can run an hotel or a school. It is surprising to find "a hotel" in McMordie's *English Idioms and How to Use Them* (p. 40 and page 410). Every word that begins with "h" and has the accent on the second syllable always takes the indefinite article "an." When the accent lies on the first syllable, the indefinite article "a" is used, for instance "an hotel," "an historical event," "a hospital." "To run in the blood." To run in the family, said of any physical or mental peculiarity. Who does not know Sam Weller's favourite expression "It runs in the family" in *Pickwick Papers*? "A sheep run." A place set apart for sheep to graze. "To take a run to a place." In this colloquial phrase "a run" signifies "a trip." "Give me a run up to-morrow." Come and give me a look-up to-morrow. "Give me a look in," is also used meaning come and see me at my place. "Run for all one is worth." When a thief is pursued by a policeman, he runs for all he is worth in order to escape capture. "Running amuck." Under the baneful influence of opium, the Malays rush about shouting "*amog, amog*," (kill, kill), and attack those whom they can lay their hands on. Hence, any person, making unreasonable attacks on others with the sword or the pen, is said to run amuck. "To get the run upon one." To have the upper hand over him. "Running patterer." A street hawker. "Running stationer" (or flying stationer). One who sells newspapers, periodicals, &c. in the street. As a person selling newspapers in the street runs with papers in his hands from one corner to another shouting *Star* or whatever papers he may have, and hence the expression. But nowadays he is generally called a newspaper boy. "I don't run to it (slang)." I don't understand it, or I can't afford it because I haven't got money enough. "To run one's week (American University)." To trust to chance for success in the examination. "To run smooth." To be prosperous. "A run for one's money." A good time in exchange for a certain expenditure of energy and cash. "He that runs may read." This is said of things which are unmistakably plain.

**RUSH.** "To rush a person" is to hurry him. The word "rush" is slangily used in the sense of cheat, as when a customer is over-charged at a shop he is said to be rushed. "To rush a Bill." To hurry through a Bill. This expression is very common in the American Senate.

**RUSS.** A Russian; the Russian language.

**RUSTY-FUSTY.** The filth which accumulates in unused places, and the bad odour arising from it are so called.

## S.

**SABBATH DAY.** Seventh day of week.

**SABBATH OF SOUND, THE.** Silence.

**SACK.** This is a kind of any dry wine as sherry sack. The word sack is a corruption of the French *sec*, meaning dry, but some contend that it receives its name from the practice of its being brought down from the mountains in sacks (bags).

**SACK.** The Hebrew word is *sag* meaning bag and in many other languages it is found in a similar form. The Scandinavian *sacka* means to seek and this sense is retained in the word ransack. Then again to sack a city is sometimes used to allude to the sacks in which soldiers carried off their booty. "To give the sack" or "I'll sack you" and similar phrases mean that the master dismisses the servant with all his belongings. It also conveys the idea of "seeking," because the servant who is to quit his master's house with the sack on his back, so to say, has to "seek" for a place anywhere.

**SAD.** "Sadder and a wiser man." This phrase occurs in the *Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge where he says :—

" A saddler and a wiser man  
He rose the morrow morn."

In early English the word "sad" seems to have been used in the sense of "steady" or "firm." In Wyclif's translation of the Bible the words "sad stoon" are used for "rock."

**SADDLE.** It literally means a grievance or a burden that must be borne. The age of the saddle is almost lost in antiquity, because in almost all the languages it is found in a similar form. In the phrase "put the saddle on the right horse," the original sense of grievance being borne is retained, because the phrase means literally "If you want to redress your grievance, blame the person who deserves the blame." The saddle imposes a sort of weariness on the horse and it is interesting to note that this sense is implied in the word "sad."

**SAFE.** It comes from the old French *sauf*, from the Latin *solus*, alone, so that originally it meant that he who put a thing away safely alone knew where it was. In early times  
" a person owning a treasure hid it in a secret place by burying

it in a hole and he "alone" knew where it was where he thought it to be "safe."

**SAIL.** "Sailing close to the wind" (nautical). This phrase metaphorically means trying to be as honest as one can, knowing that honesty is the best policy, though by so doing one may not at once achieve what one desires.

**SAILOR, SAILER.** We speak of a sailor, but when we say that such and such a ship is a good sailer we mean that it sails well on the water.

**SAKE.** This is an Anglo-Saxon word and comes from the Anglo-Saxon *sacan*, to strive, and *sacu*, strife, so that the word "sake" at once puts us in mind of striving together side by side against a common enemy and of cherishing it in memory. Thus sake is the very opposite of forsake and all the charms that are reminiscent of the old days are summed up in the beautiful phrase "For old sake's sake." It now only wants an ambitious author to enrich the English language by adding to it the verb "to sake" in opposition to "to forsake."

**SALAAM.** This word which literally means "peace" is an Arabic word.

**SALOON.** "Shaving saloon." Barber's shop.

**SALT.** "Not worth his salt." The word "salt" and "salary" are closely connected, the word "salary" being derived from the Latin *salarium* (salt), the allowance made to the Roman soldier in order that he might provide himself with salt, which was during those days a valuable and highly prized commodity. "To salt the books." When a person about to sell a business connection makes fictitious entries in the book, to simulate that the receipts are greater than they really are, he is said to salt the books. It is a commercial term. "Rather too salt." Generally said of an extravagant hotel bill. "Above the salt." In a position of honour. Formerly the salt-cellar was placed in the centre of the table and those who were equal in rank to the host sat nearer to it than those of inferior rank. The opposite of this is "below the salt." "The salt of the earth." That portion of a community which influences the rest for its good. The expression is taken from the Bible:—"Ye are the salt of the earth." "To eat a man's salt." To be his guest; to partake of his hospitality. "True to his salt." Faithful to his employer. In this expression salt means salary or interest.

**SALTEE.** A penny.

**SALUTE.** It comes from the Latin *salus*, meaning health, so that when you salute a person you really greet him and at the same time enquire after his health.



**SAME.** In commercial correspondence, "the same" is 'used in the sense of "it" as a substantive.

**SAMENESS, SIMILARITY.** Sameness is absolute, and similarity is partial, resemblance.

**SAMPLE.** This is an abbreviation of the word "example." It comes from the Latin *ex*, from, and *amplus* much.

**SAND.** An equivalent for grit or courage.

**SANDAL-WOOD ENGLISH.** A jargon which the natives in the Pacific Islands speak. It was first taught by the barterers in sandalwood, and hence the expression.

**SANDWICH.** Originally it means meat between two pieces of bread, although sandwiches have now many forms. This word is named directly after the Earl of Sandwich, who lived in the reign of George the Third. It is said that he was so great a gambler that he could not wait to take his dinner, but took his food in this form while he continued his play.

**SANDWICH-MEN.** Boardmen. Poor fellows who for paltry wages walk the pavement with advertisement boards on chest and back.

**SANTA CLAUS.** "St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children. St. Nicholas Day is December 6th. In old days it was the custom for someone to dress up on December 5th to distribute toys among the good children. Nowadays, children are taught to expect the visit of Santa Claus late on Christmas Eve. A stocking is hung up and filled by parent or friend, and the little one only dreams of keeping awake to see the toy-laden saint come down the chimney."—Basil Hargrave, *Origins and Meaning of Popular Phrases and Names*.

**SAP.** (Eton.) One who works hard. Similar expressions are "smug," "swot," "bloke," and "mugster."

**SAPPERS AND MINERS.** It is a military term and is applied to the "Royal Engineers," who were originally organised as "Sappers and Miners." Their duties are many, such as erecting telegraphs, preparing submarine mines, executing survey work in general, &c. The word "sap" is derived from the Latin word *sapa*, a pickaxe, and denotes the process of undermining.

**SAPPY.** Colloquially used for "silly."

**SARCASM.** It comes from the Greek *sarkazo*, meaning to flay, hence literally it means to flay a person with the tongue.

**SARDINE.** (American.) "A man who has nothing distinctive or characteristic in him; a mere average man; a provincial who has always been shut up in some small place among men like himself. Obviously derived from the sardine,

which being all of the same size, and packed in tin boxes, suggested to some poetic orator the simile."—*Dictionary of Slang, Jargon, and Cant*.

**SARDONIC GRIN.** The forced and jeering laugh of a cynic. Probably derived from a Greek plant *Sardonion*.

**SASS.** Vulgarly used for sauciness or impertinence.

**SASS.** (African coast.) When a person becomes too bold or wicked, he is slangily said "to get too much sass."

**SATAN.** The Hebrew word *Satan* means an enemy in the sense of the enemy of mankind. In his *Paradise Lost* Milton speaks of Satan as "The adversary of God and man."

**SATI.** It comes from the Sanskrit *Sati* meaning chaste, and *Sati* in India was a rite by which a widow sacrificed herself on the funeral pile of her husband.

**SATIATE, SURFEIT.** Satisfy comes from *satis*, enough, and signifies to have more than enough. Surfeit comes from Latin *super*, above, and *facere*, to do; hence it means to overdo.

**SATIN.** This word and the fabric to which it is applied are both of Chinese origin. It is also maintained that we get it from the Latin *setinus*, glossy, an adjective derived from *seta*, the hair so that "satin" literally means glossy like the hair.

**SATIRE, SATYR.** A satire is a dramatic farce, being a piece of sarcasm. A satyr is a forest deity.

**SATURDAY.** Anglo-Saxon *saterdaeg*, day of Saturn, the God of time.

**SAUCE-BOX.** A pert young person. It also signifies the mouth.

**SAUCER.** Although this now represents the little hollow dish that accompanies a tea-cup, originally it was used to denote a plate in which vegetables were served, and vegetables were called "sauces." At that time the word was spelt "sawser."

**SAUNTERERS.** Originally saunterer was the name given to those enthusiasts who made the pilgrimage to the *Saints Terre* (the Holy Land).

**SAVE.** "To save one's skin." To get off without bodily hurt.

**SAWNEY.** Nickname for Scotsmen. Red-haired people are called "sandy," and this word "sawney" is a corruption of "sandy." Scotsmen are invariably red-haired.

**SAXON.** This term was applied to the English by the people of Ireland both contemptuously and reproachfully. The famous Irish agitator, Daniel O'Connell, was very fond of using this word.

**SAYING THE THING THAT IS NOT.** Swift first used this expression in the sense of "lie." Similar expressions are "somewhat distorting the facts"; "I fear you have done yourself some wrong"; "fib"; "whopper"; "taradiddle"; "fish story"; "fairy tale"; "terminological inexactitude"; &c. But nothing beats Swift's phrase "saying the thing that is not." All the said expressions are used to avoid the vulgar expression "you lie."

**SCAB.** (American.) An opprobrious epithet applied to a workman or mechanic who continues at work during a strike, that is, a blackleg. It also means a worthless person.

**SCALES.** It comes from the Latin *scala* meaning a ladder, and it has come to mean a "weighing instrument" from the resemblance of the graduated marks on the beam of the balance to the rounds of a ladder.

**SCAMP.** It literally is one who deserts his colours in time of war, as the word comes from the Latin *ex* meaning from, and *campus* meaning the field (of battle). This sense is retained to a certain extent in the phrase "he scamped his work."

**SCANDALUM MAGNATUM.** Offence of defaming magnates of the realm. "Scandalum Magnatum" is a favourite with the lower class novelist who takes magnatum for a participle meaning magnified, and finds the combination less homely than a shocking affair. It is a genitive plural noun, and the amplified translation of the two words, which we borrow from the Encyclopædia, runs: "Slander of great men, such as peers, judges, or great officers of state, whereby discord may arise within the realm."—*The King's English*.

**SCAPEGOAT.** (Escape-goat.) The allusion is to an old Jewish custom; the goat which was set at liberty on the day of solemn expiation to bear away the sins of the people. Hence a scapegoat is one who is made to bear the blame of another person or receives the punishment which is due to another. The scapegoat of the family is one who is always found fault with, though it matters not who is in the wrong. To make a scapegoat of one is to make cat's-paw of one.

**SCAPEGRACE.** It literally means one who gets no grace, hence a graceless person. It is applied to an idle, hair-brained person, especially to a hair-brained child who constantly gets into trouble. As a rule grown-up scapegraces are sent abroad as a last resource.

**SCARAMOUCH.** This comes from the Italian word *scarra-muccia*. In an Italian comedy there was a character by that name and he was represented as a poltroon and a braggadocio. Hence the word signifies a cowardly bragg-

docio, and is used contemptuously in a 'somewhat friendly manner)

**SCARCE.** It is derived from the Low-Latin *ex-carpus* meaning picked out, and hence anything that is scarce (rare) requires careful picking out from a lot. To get "the pick" of anything is to get the best, or in other words what is scarce.

**SCARCELY, HARDLY.** Scarcely refers to quantity; hardly to degree.

**SCENERY.** The present meaning of the word is quite modern. It comes from the Greek *skene* and originally it meant a covered place, whence it came to mean a stage, and the painted representation of a scene was a "scenery."

**SCHEDULE.** It comes from the Latin *scheda*, a strip of papyrus, or probably from the Greek *schede*, anything formed by cleaving, a leaf. Papyrus-strips were the Egyptian overseers' day-book for registering the work done by each workman under his control and the dried palm-leaves have made a history because it was on these that the Sacred Vedas of India were inscribed. The "schedule" may also signify a blank form and this sense is retained in the phrase "to turn over a new leaf," which literally means to turn over a page which is blank and on which a better record could be written.

**SCHOLAR.** Although the word scholar literally means one who attends a school and is often used in the sense of a student, as Shakespeare does in the line "I am no breeching scholar in the schools," the word has a higher sense attached to it. Scholar is equivalent to *savant*, one who has attained to a high literary standard, or one who is deeply versed in any branch of knowledge. Dr. Bhandarkar is a Sanskrit scholar. The word is also technically applied to a student who wins a "scholarship."

**SCHOOL.** The Greek word *schole* meant leisure and those who want to acquire thorough knowledge to school their minds must needs have leisure. Although the word is applied to a building it is used to denote a company of people, for instance, "a school of learning" meaning those who are devoted to the same branch of study. "School of fish." (Nautical.) Instead of using the common expression "a shoal of fish," sailors say "a school of fish."

**SCISSORS.** This word was formerly *cizars*, from the Latin *caedere* meaning to cut. The modern spelling of the word is due to the fact that it became connected with the Latin *scissor* meaning a cutter.

**SCORE.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *scoran*, the past participle of *sceran*, to cut and it denoted a notch made on

a stick—a tally. For the purpose of keeping a reckoning notches of various sizes were made, small ones for pennies larger ones for silver, and still larger ones for gold coins. Shakespeare in *Henry VI.* refers to this old custom:—"Our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally." The word "score" carries with it the idea of a cut or an incision and this sense is retained in the phrase "to pay off old scores" which literally means to take one's revenge for wrongs or grievances which have cut deep.

**SCOTCH.** "I did not scotch my mind." I spoke plainly, literally I did not hide my mind. In the opinion of the compiler there seems to be an allusion in this phrase to the shrewd and calculating characteristic of the Scot, who listens, but does not make a free use of his tongue. "A Scotch breakfast." A substantial breakfast made up of nice things to eat and drink. In the European world, the Scotch are the most renowned for their hospitable tables.

**SCOTLAND YARD.** The headquarters of the Metropolitan Police are so called because Scotland Yard was the site of a palace built for the use of the Kings of Scotland when they visited England.

**SCOUNDREL.** This word which means a low, worthless fellow also carries with it the sense of something to be shunned. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *scunner*, *scunian*, meaning to loathe, to shun.

**SCOURGE OF GOD.** In 433 there lived the King of Huns named Attila whose reign was marked by a series of havoc of war, and he was called the "Scourge of God." Hence one who causes no end of bloodshed is the scourge of God.

**SCRAP.** Vulgar term for quarrel or fight.

**SCRATCH.** "To come up to the scratch." Up to the mark. In a prize ring the scratch is the line up to which the boxers are led. "A scratch crew." In a boat-race it means a random crew as distinguished from a regular one. "A scratch team" in cricket is a team the players in which are selected off-hand. "A scratch race." A race of horses, boys and others, irrespective of age, weight or previous records. "A scratch runner." One who in handicap starts from the scratch (the starting point) and gets no advantage.

**SCREW.** "He has a screw loose somewhere," means he is mentally weak. Similar slang expressions are "He has a tile off in the upper storey"; "he is balmy"; &c. The allusion is to joinery kept together by screws and if there is once a screw loose, the joinery is not complete.

**SCRIP.** This word has no connection with "scrip" or "script" meaning a writing. It is derived from the Icelandic *skreppa*, and means a bag, a wallet.

**SCRUPLE.** The Latin word *scrupus* means a sharp stone, and the pivot on which the balance-bar rested, when the balance was made of wood, was a sharp-edged stone. In weighing the buyer and the seller watched the balance with scrupulous care and this sense is retained in the phrase "to have a scruple", which literally means to weigh the matter in one's mind and hesitate.

**SEARCH.** This is derived from the Latin *circuire*, to go about, *circus*, a circle. Hence to search for a thing is to look for it within a certain radius, while to seek is to look anywhere and not within a limited circle. Of the French word *chercher*, which is an abbreviation of the first two syllables of the Latin words, the word search is a contraction.

**SEASONABLE, TIMELY.** That which is seasonable is in keeping with the season (occasion), but that which is timely is in good time, and hence opportune.

**SECT, SECTION.** Both these words come from the Latin *sectam*, to cut; but section is abstract, while sect is concrete. Sect is generally applied to a body of people who have dissented from an established church and formed a religious dogma of their own, as the sect of the Sikhs which dissents from Brahmanism. But the word is also applied to a body of people allied together in a common cause such as the Liberal sect, as distinguished from the Conservative sect. It will be interesting to note here that Macaulay uses this word in the general sense of a class or order. Section properly means a division that is a part separated from the whole. Thus a few Liberals who hold more advanced views, and have separated themselves from the body of Liberals, are called Radicals (the Radical section).

**SEE, WITNESS.** See refers to things or persons, and witness to events. We see a man, but witness a cricket-match.

**SEE.** In street parlance, the meaning of "to see" is to believe, to credit, or to know, as in the phrase "I don't see that."

**SEE-SAW.** A game in which two children, by standing on each end of a long piece of timber balanced on a support, move alternately up and down. This word is a reduplicated form of saw, the motion suggesting two sawyers at work on a piece of log.

**SEMBLE.** (French). It seems, or it appears.

**SENSATION.** Nowadays newspapers call a noteworthy event a sensation, because it causes a sensation. It is certainly not a literary term.

**SENSUAL, SENSUOUS.** A sensual man is one given to the gratification of animal passions; a sensuous man is one whose senses are keenly alive to the appreciation of the beautiful.

**SENTRY.** Many lexicographers have obscured the etymology of this word by attempting to treat it along with sentinel. It originally meant watch-tower, as "a sentrie, water-tower, beacon." Afterwards it came to mean a band of soldiers, and now means an individual soldier. It is not difficult to account for the change in the meaning of this word. It is quite an ordinary phenomenon in military language that the abstract name of an action is employed to signify the building in which the action is performed, then to the men thus employed, and finally to the single soldier. Take the case of the word custody. The Latin *custodia* from which this word is derived means (1) guardianship, (2) a watch-tower, (3) the watch collectively, and (4) a watchman. The abstract sense of the word sentry still survives in the phrase "to keep sentry."

**SEPTEMBER.** (*Septem*, or 7.) It was the seventh month of the old Roman calendar.

**SERVE.** "To serve a person out." To take revenge upon a person. "It serves you right." You fully deserve the punishment you are undergoing. If you persist in gambling in spite of the fact that gambling eventually leads one to ruin, and if you go on losing day by day until you find yourself quite out of pocket, it serves you right.

**SETTLE.** Settlement conveys the idea of a previous dispute, and hence in merely sending a payment which is due, it is not strictly correct to say "in settlement of my bill" unless that bill has been disputed.

**SETTLE.** A long high-backed oak-bench with arms at each end, and on this bench the farmer and his men settled themselves. Also if the farmer had any business matter to discuss, he would sit on the bench with his neighbour and settle it.

**SEVEN.** "Seven Liberal Arts." Another name for *belles lettres*. (See *Belles Lettres*.) "The seven deadly sins." Pride, envy, wrath, sloth, covetousness, gluttony and lust. Edmund Spenser alludes to these seven deadly sins in his famous work *Faerie Queene*. Shakespeare also uses this expression when he says:—

"Sure it is no sin;  
Or of the deadly sins it is the least."

**SEWAGE, SEWERAGE.** "Sewage is the waste matter which is carried off through drains and sewers; sewerage is the system of piping and draining by means of which the sewage is carried off."—*A Desk-book of Errors in English*.

**SEWN.** "I have sewn the button on." This should really be "I have sewed the button on." To sew means to stitch, and to sow to grow, as, for instance, to sow seeds. The past

participle of the word "to sew" is "sewed," whereas "sown" is the past participle of "to sow."

**SHADE, SHADOW.** These words have not the same meaning. That side of an object which is farthest from the side is in "shade," and the "shadow" is what one object casts upon other objects surrounding it whose light it intercepts.

**SHAFT.** In architecture, the part of a column between its base and its capital.

**SHAKE.** "It gives me the shakes." Slang for "it gives me the shivers." The colloquial expression "no great shakes" means "not much good," or "of no great importance."

**SHALL, WILL.** These two auxiliaries are often erroneously applied, even by some of the best writers. The simple rule is this: Shall pertains to the first person, and will to the second and third persons, and in these cases shall and will denote futurity of action, or are used to make a mere statement. But when shall is used in the second and third persons, it denotes either compulsion or threat, and will in the first person denotes determination or wish. For instance, "Thou shalt not steal" means that thou art commanded not to steal. "I will have this woman for my wife" means "I am fully determined to have this woman for my wife." The following couplet will more clearly illustrate the difference between shall and will.—

"He that will not when he can  
He shall not when he will."

This couplet means that he who will not do a thing when he can do it will not be allowed to do it when he wants to do it. The auxiliary Will, should not be confounded with the substantive verb To Will. The past tense of the former is "would," while that of the latter is "willed." In the sentence "He willed me to do it," it means that he induced me to do it by exercising his will-power over me, and "willed" has nothing whatever to do with the auxiliary "will."

**SHAM.** Pretended; counterfeit. It also means mock, as in "sham fight." Some authorities think that sham is an affected pronunciation of shame.

**SHAMBLES.** This comes from the Anglo-Saxon *scamel*; and the Latin *scamellum*, a little bench, and it formerly signified benches on which meat was laid out for sale. Now it denotes the yard where cattle are slaughtered.

**SHAVE.** A narrow escape. "Shave through." It is a Cambridge term meaning just escaping failure at an examination by coming out at the bottom of the list.

**SHAVE.** "To shave" (drapery trade). To overcharge a customer. When a master sees an opportunity of doing this,



he strikes his chin as a signal to his assistant who is serving the customer, who, as a rule, is a lady. As ladies are the chief customers at the draper's shop, this process is not improperly described as "shaving the ladies."

**SHAVER.** A sharp fellow.

**SHED.** "To shed a tear." To take a drink. "Now then, old cocky, come and shed a tear," is the expression which one often hears in England. A similar expression in America is "will you smile" signifying "will you drink," as a dram of alcohol is called "smile" in America. Neat spirits when taken by younger persons bring tears to their eyes, and hence the expression.

**SHEENY.** Contemptuously applied to a Jew.

**SHEKAREE.** This Indian word literally means a hunter, but it has come to mean one who lives by trapping game. In England too it is so applied.

**SHERBET.** It is an Arabic word.

**SHIBBOLETH.** Hebrew word meaning "an ear of corn." Now applied to such ideas as are sectarian in their nature.

**SHIFT.** The paper *Academy* says that the audience broke up in disorder at the word "shift," which occurred in a play by J. M. Synge which he produced in 1907 in Dublin. One cannot help thinking that this was ridiculous, because the word "shift" in the sense of change of raiment is in itself a euphemism for "smock."

**SHILLY-SHALLY.** It is a corruption of "shall I, shall I?" which in itself denotes hesitation on the part of the person. Shilly-shally is also used as a verb in the sense of hesitating, as "he shilly-shallied a good while."

**SHINER.** This word is mostly used in East London and means a looking-glass.

**SHINY, or SHINNY.** Drunk.

**SHIP.** Originally a ship was just a tree trunk scooped out and so shaped as to make it floatable. Hence "ship" meaning something "shaped" that could float safely on the water. In the phrase "When my ship comes home" in the sense of "when my fortune is made," there is an allusion to the merchant-vessels coming into the harbour laden with rich freights from abroad. "Ship of the desert." This phrase signifies a camel. "Ship-shape." Things arranged in good order. Sometimes this phrase is varied to "ship-shape and Bristol fashion." Things have to be necessarily arranged neatly on a ship because the space is limited, and hence the expression. "Ship's husband." The agent and sometimes the owner himself who personally supervises the outfit of a ship is called the ship's husband.

**SHIVER.** "To beat the shivers." To fight against death and ward it off for the time being. He struggled with all his remaining strength to beat the shivers. "To give the shivers." To say or do something which makes another person's flesh creep. What you tell me gives me the shivers. A similar expression is "to give the creeps."

**SHOAL.** Crowd; throng. Figuratively used in the sense of "lots." "Shoals of inquiries"; "shoals of letters."

**SHOW.** To show one's teeth, to get angry.

**SHREW.** The little animal of this name has a sharp bite and hence this word was applied to a woman with a sharp tongue, in anything but a complimentary way. At the same time, to call a man a "shrewd" man, meaning clever, is to pay him a compliment, and it must be noted that the animal "shrew" has not only a sharp bite, but is found to be a clever beast.

**SHUT.** "To shut up." A vulgar way of forcibly asking another to hold his tongue. The expression with a similar expression, familiar among the Greeks was "keep an ox on your tongue." "Shut up" also means exhausted or done for, as, for instance, "That shut him up," means that he was so exhausted that he could not speak any more. The American slang is "shut up your face," or "cork up your whisky bottle."

**SICK.** "Sick man of Europe." Applied to Turkey. The phrase attributed to William Ewart Gladstone.

**SIEGE, SEIGE.** A siege is an invasion of a city by military forces; a seige is a flock of birds.

**SIEVE, SEIVE.** A sieve is a kind of utensil for sifting; a seive is a rush-wick.

**SIGHT.** Colloquially it means a great number, as "a sight of people."

**SIGN-MANUAL.** The signature of the Sovereign.

**SILENT, TACITURN, RETICENT.** Silent simply means not speaking. Taciturn denotes an uncongenial trait in the character of the person, who behaves like that in society, and therefore such a person makes an unentertaining companion. Reticent denotes stealthily silent *i.e.* keeping back what others have a right to know. "Silent as a standing pool." Other synonyms are "Silent as the growth of flowers," "Silent as your shadow"; "silent as the foot of time"; "silent as thought"; "silent as a dream."

**SILK.** The derivation of this word is something in the nature of a problem. It is generally believed to have come from Greco-Latin *sericum*, being a name derived from an Eastern people called the Seres. The Anglo-Saxon word was *scole*.

It should, however, be noted that all the Romance languages have for silk a name the common root of which is Latin *socla*, bristle. The "r" in the Latin *sericum* has become "l" in English, and as the English race can spell the "r," it is evident that if the word silk is derived from *sericum* it must have passed through an Eastern dialect which had no "r."

**SILLY.** This word is from the Anglo-Saxon *soelig*, meaning blessed. The infant Christ was described by an early poet as "the harmless, silly babe," meaning the blessed babe or the innocent babe. This word has now entirely changed its meaning, and has come to mean "foolish or gullible." "Silly ass." Stupid person. "Silly coon." Stupid person. "A silly old coot." A coot is a small water-fowl noted for its stupidity, and hence the expression.

**SIMON PURE.** The name of a character in Mrs. Centlivre's admirable comedy of *A Bold Stroke for a Wife* which has become a household word signifying "the real man," or "the genuine article."

**SIMPLE.** "Simple-answered." The expression "be simple-answered" which occurs in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, means "answer simply." "Simple Simon." A very stupid person. In the well-known nursery rhyme entitled "Simple Simon" this is a person so dense and stupid that he thought he could secure a pie from a passing tradesman without paying for it.

**SINE DIE.** (Latin.) Indefinitely.

**SINE PROLE.** (Latin.) Without issue.

**SINE QUA NON.** This Latin phrase is used to signify some indispensable condition. For instance, breathing is a *sine qua non* of living.

**SINECURE.** It comes from the Latin *sine cura* meaning without care. Hence a sinecure is an office without care, the person being paid but having little to do.

**SINEWS OF WAR.** An unlimited supply of money or funds for the purposes of warfare, as "endless money supplies the very sinews of war."

**SINGULAR.** This word was formerly used in the sense of alone.

**SINGULAR; UNCOMMON.** Singular is that which stands alone and by itself, and hence, remarkable. Uncommon is that which stands outside the run of the usual. In vulgar sense it is used for "uncommonly" to signify "to an unusual degree or extremely." "She is uncommonly beautiful" is a better expression and more grammatical than "She is uncommon beautiful."

**SINN FEIN.** Literally means "ourselves alone." It is the name of an organised body whose object is to promote goods of Irish manufacture and thus obtain control of purely Irish affairs. In short, it means an ideal Irish Ireland.

**SIR.** This word "sir" is supposed to have been extracted from the Latin *senior* through the French.

**SIRENS.** According to Homer, Sea-Maidens who dwelt in an island between *Acacia* and *Scylla*, near the south-west coast of Italy, and sang so sweetly that the mariners who passed along that coast forgot their country and died in an ecstasy of delight.

**SIRLOIN.** King Charles the Second once dined upon a loin of beef and he was so pleased with it that he asked what sort of joint it was. He was told that it was a loin of beef, whereupon the King exclaimed that it was worthy of being knighted, and he called it "Sir Loin." This circumstance is described in the following verses :—

"Our Second Charles, of fame *facete*  
On loin of beef did dine ;  
He held his sword, pleased, o'er the meat,  
'Arise, thou famed Sir Loin.'"

**SISYPHEAN TASK.** A very trying, thankless and impossible task. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was condemned in Hades to roll a great stone up a hill. As soon as the stone came near the top it rolled back to the valley.

**SIT TIGHT.** It is pure slang, and means to "refuse to move." "The exiles, it appears, intend to sit tight until the *Umgeni* returns to South Africa with her priceless cargo."—*Evening News*, 1914.

**SIT UNDER.** (Church.) "To sit under" means to attend the services of, hence to sit under a clergyman means to attend a church.

**SITE, SITUATION.** The site is the spot on which anything is situated. Situation signifies what is placed in a certain manner.

**SIVA.** In Hindoo mythology, the supreme being. "The Changer of Form."

**SKIDOO.** It is recent slang for "get out" or "run away," as, "I will skidoo."

**SKIN.** "To skin" is a vulgar expression for "to deprive by extorting or by means of a trick."

**SKUNK.** Although this word fittingly describes a person of a very objectionable character, it is not suited to polite society.

**SKY.** "To sky a picture" is to exhibit it by placing it high upon the wall. "To laud one to the skies" is to be loud in one's praise. "Sky-pilot" is a slang term for a preacher.

**SLAP.** "Slap-bang." In sport it means slap here and bang there; signifying the constant discharge of the gun. It is used in the sense of "very dashing" as a laudatory term. "Slap-bang, here we are again" means we have popped in without ceremony. Charles Dickens uses it, however, in the sense of a low eating-house. "Slap-dash." It means in an off-hand or perfunctory manner. The allusion is to the slapping and dashing of walls in order to give them the appearance of papered walls, as at one time the walls were coloured instead of papered.

**SLEEP.** "Sleepy head" (slang). A dullard. "To sleep on bones" (slang). To sleep in a lap. "Let the child sleep on bones" means let the child sleep in the nurse's lap. "To sleep on both ears" (slang). To sleep soundly. "Sleeper." This is a slang expression for a sleeping car. "To sleep on a thing or on a perplexing problem." This phrase is almost dead. Explained by illustration:—I am reminded of the phrase by a quotation from the late Duke of Argyll's own account of how Disraeli offered him the Governorship of Canada. "The Queen . . . after sleeping on it, was quite in favour of the proposal," said Disraeli. Once upon a time nobody gave a decision without "sleeping on" it. But this is the day of swift decisions. A business man told me yesterday that half the City wouldn't know what you meant if you said you would "sleep on" a thing. It must be yes or no within a few seconds to-day.—The Rambler in the *Daily Mirror*, dated the 7th May, 1914.

**SLEEPING PARTNER.** A partner who invests his money in a business but takes no active part in the management. Such a partner, however, shares in the profits as well as in the losses.

**SLICK OFF.** To finish a thing "slick off" means to do it on the spot quickly and thoroughly.

**SLIM.** A girl slight in figure, is spoken of as "slim," and so is a tea-cake called a slim cake, because of its thinness. Thus the word "slim" is only used in the senses of slender, slight in figure. But the original meaning of the word was bad, from the German *schlimm*, bad, and this sense is retained in the expressions "slim attendance," "a slim excuse." It is not to be wondered at that this original sense of the word is unconsciously restored, since so much of the German element is mixed with the English language.

**SLING.** It is an American drink composed of equal parts of water and spirit.

**SLIP-SHOD.** Literally it means with shoes down at heels, and applied to literature it means a loose careless style of composition no more fit to be seen than a man with shoes down at heels.

**SLOB.** It is a vulgar equivalent for "a careless and incompetent person."

**SLOGGER** (cricket). Blind hitter; a cricket player who plays in an unscientific manner.

**SLOP SHOP.** A clothing shop. Slop comes from the Icelandic *slopper*, meaning a coat.

**SLOPPY.** When applied to persons it means silly and sentimental, as, she is a sloppy girl.

**SLOUGH OF DESPOND.** This phrase occurs in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It means hopeless floundering in sin.

**SLOW.** Slangily used for a stupid person.

**SLOW COACH.** A person who gets on slowly like a slow coach.

**SLOW WORM.** Slow in this word is not from slow, but is probably related to *slean*, meaning strike. Though a slow-worm is quite a harmless sort of reptile, it has always been regarded with terror by the people.

**SLUM.** It is a cant word for a muddy and dark alley. "He is famous in society and slum" means he is well-known both among persons of high class and low grade. As a verb it means to go about low places. "It is stated that for some reason or another this person was in the habit of slumming; he would visit the lowest parts of London and scour the slums of the East End."—*Globe*.

**SLUMMY.** Slangily used for a servant-girl.

**SLY.** "On the sly." Secretly.

**SMACK.** In the sentence "a father smacks a naughty child" the word forms itself merely from the sound produced by the light, quick blow with the hand. We also speak of something eaten "smacking" of an unusual flavour, and in this instance it comes from the Anglo-Saxon *smoec*, to taste. Then again we see a fleet of "smacks." In this sense the word should be really spelt "snack" being derived from the Anglo-Saxon *snacc*, and the Danish *snakke*, a term by which the Danes denoted their long narrow boats, the movements of which on the water were like those of a snake.

**SMALLS.** This is a colloquialism for small clothes. "Small hours." The hours after twelve, i.e. midnight. "Small talk." It means idle conversation that relates to trivial matters, such as weather, &c.

**SMOKE.** "To end in smoke" means to come to no result whatever.

**SMUTTY.** A slang word for "dirty or filthy," as, I say, that is a smutty yarn (dirty story).

**SNAKE.** "A snake in the grass." A hidden enemy.

**SNAP.** "To snap fingers at." To show one's contempt for.

**SNOB.** One who affects to be what he is not and tries to imitate those who are socially superior to him. It is a university term. In some colleges those who are not genteel or noble by birth are marked down on the list as *s. nob.*, that is, *sine nobilitate* (without nobility), and hence the expression. A snob is also a shoemaker or cobbler, and hence "to snob" has come to mean to do a job in a slovenly manner.

**SNUFF-BOX.** The nose.

**SNUFFY.** Tipsy.

**SOAP.** The vulgar expression "how is he off for soap" means "how rich is he," and is really euphemistic. As a verb, slangily, it is used in the senses of to flatter and to bribe.

**SOC.** This is an abbreviation of the word society.

**SOCIALISM.** Socialism originated with the labour cry against capitalism. The cry was that the capitalists made all the money at the sweat of the employee's brow, and the labour party demanded that the wages of these men should be in keeping with the principles of natural justice and equity. Gradually the word began to cover a vaster area and touched upon the very fabric of society, so that its present aim is to reform the existing social system, to do away with rank, nobility and monarchy, to raise the price and value of labour, and to establish a sort of universal equality. The Socialists in themselves are a harmless body.

**SOCIETY.** The upper ten. The phrase "he is a society man" means that he belongs to "the upper ten."

**SOCK AND BUSKIN.** *Sock* was the name given to the shoes which were formerly worn by comedians, while *buskin* was a high-heeled shoe worn by tragedians.

"Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here  
Nor greater Johnson dares in socks appear."—*Dryden*.

"He was a critic upon operas too  
And knew all niceties of the sock and buskin."—*Byron*.

**SOFA.** This is an Arabic word.

**SOFT SAWDER.** *Sawder* in this phrase is a corrupted form of *solder*. This colloquial expression means flattery and is used with a view to tickle a person's vanity in order to gain some object. Soft soap is a similar expression.

**SOJOURN.** It comes from the Latin *sub-diurnus*, for a day, temporarily.

**SOL.** (Latin.) The sun.

**SOLDAN.** This word which is now obsolete means Sultan.

**SOLDIER.** It literally means a paid man, coming as it does from the Latin *soldus*, *solidus*, meaning military pay; a solid piece of money. In mediæval Latin this word was *soldarius*, and this was softened down into *sowdeor* in the fifteenth century. It should be noted that the vulgar pronunciation of this word as *sodger* is nearer the original than soldier, as "l" was brought in by learned influence.

**SOLECISM.** Offence against grammar or idiom. It is so called from the bad Greek of the Soli colonists in Asia Minor. It was at first a slang term.

**SOLEMN.** "The Latin is *solemnis*, *solennis*, from *solus*, 'whole,' and *annus*, 'year,' and signifies 'annual' with special reference to religious celebrations; hence solemnise, and a solemnity, 'A solemn person' shows a transference of the epithet."—*Words and their Ways in English Speech*.

**SO-LONG.** This is a corruption of *salaam*, meaning good-bye till we meet.

**SOME OF THESE DAYS.** Soon.

**SOOR.** (Anglo-Indian.) It is a Hindustani word meaning a pig, and is a most abusive word when applied to a man.

**SOP.** A soft, foolish man.

**SOPHIST.** This word properly means a wise teacher, and its evil sense is due to the *Dialogues* of Plato, in which the philosophy of these philosophers was attacked by Socrates. Unsophisticated literally means "unadulterated," or "unspoiled," but it is always used in a contemptuous sense.

**SORROW.** In Ireland this word is used in a negative sense. Maria Edgeworth says, "... But sorrow bit could they hear" i.e. they heard nothing.

**SORRY.** This word has two significations, that of "grieved" and that of "worthless, good-for-nothing," and hence regrettable. In the former case it always follows the subjective case, as "he is sorry" (grieved). In the latter case it always precedes the subjective case, as "he is a sorry (good-for-nothing) fellow," or "it is a sorry (worthless) bargain," or "a sorry excuse" i.e. a lame and therefore worthless excuse. Poetically "it was a sorry sight" means it was a poor sight, worthy of pity.

**SO-SO.** Not very good. In answer to an inquiry after health, if you answer "I am so-so," it means I am not very well.

**SOT.** It comes from the French *sot*, meaning foolish but it has come to signify a drunkard, because habitual drunkenness is nothing short of folly.

**SOUND.** "Sound as a bell." Quite sound. If a bell is not sound it is quite useless as a bell.



**SOUR.** "Sour grapes." This term is used in *Aesop's fable* entitled "The Fox and the Grapes." When a person despairs of getting a thing which he most desires, he feels so chagrined that he speaks of that very thing contemptuously. The other party then chaffs at that person by retorting, "Ah, the grapes are sour."

**SOV.** This is an abbreviation of the word sovereign.

**SPADE.** "To call a spade a spade" is to call a scoundrel a scoundrel, *i.e.* to be perfectly straightforward in what one says without mincing matters.

**SPARE THE ROD AND SPOIL THE CHILD.** This saying is attributed to Solomon. But what he said was "He that spareth the rod hateth his son." The word rod here does not necessarily mean stick, or, in other words, it does not refer to corporal punishment. The word "rod" is used in Psalm XXIII., where David says: "The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want. . . . His rod and His staff they comfort me." The rod was simply the symbol of authority and power, and in the saying by Solomon it simply means parental authority.

**SPARTAN TRAINING.** Severe system of training which teaches courage and great physical endurance. In ancient Sparta all young men were taught to believe that smarting under physical pain was a sign of cowardice.

**SPEAK.** "To speak of." Worth mentioning, as, I think this subject is something to speak of. "To speak a ship." When the captain of one ship hails that of the other and speaks to him, through a speaking trumpet, he speaks that other ship. "To speak under one's breath." To speak in a low, whispering tone. We always speak under our breath near a sick-bed. "To speak volumes." To furnish ample testimony to.

**SPECIALITY, SPECIALTY.** The Standard Dictionary draws the distinction between these two words as follows:—"Speciality is the state or quality of being special; specialty is an employment to which one is specially devoted, an article in which one specially deals, or the like."

**SPEECH, TALK, CONVERSATION.** Speech relates to the faculty of articulation. Talk is connected with tale and tell and signifies familiar chatter or conversation. Conversation is nearly the same as talk, only there is more ceremony about it, and is not used in a familiar sense. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, conversation was applied to conduct or "walk of life."

**SPELL.** The expression, "I shall stay a spell" in the sense of staying for a little while, is not correct, because "spell" does not represent period of time; usage, however, sanctions the expression "a long spell of fine weather."

**SPELL-BINDER.** American term meaning an orator who by sheer force of his eloquence holds his audience "spell-bound." This word originated during the presidential election in the United States of America in 1888.

**SPEND, WASTE.** The word "spend" is derived from the Latin *expendere*, meaning to weigh, and the very etymology of the word implies discretion in spending. The following quotation from Herbert shows the exact meaning of the word :—

"I am never loath  
To spend my judgment"

*i.e.* to make a discreet use of judgment. The word waste is derived from the Latin *vastus*, uncultivated; hence it implies spending something in a thoughtless and foolish manner without benefiting oneself. The sense, as implied in the etymology, is that of a tract of land; one who cultivates it is said to spend it, and one who leaves it barren, to waste it. Spenser says :—

"Thou barren ground whom Winter's wrath has wasted."

**SPENSER.** "The Earl of Spenser, a celebrated dandy about 1800, once made a bet that he could introduce the fashion of wearing an overcoat so short that the tails of his coat would appear beneath it. He won his bet, and the name spenser was given to short coats of this style, and has since been transferred to a woman's garment."

**SPENT.** (Hunting.) "A deer is said to be spent when it stretches out its neck, and is at the point of death. In sea language, a broken mast is said to be spent."—Dr. Brewer. Hence, it means weary.

**SPERATE.** This excellent word is little used now. It is the opposite of desperate, and it means to hope reasonably. It comes from the Latin *speratus*, to hope.

**SPICE.** A flavouring. One sometimes hears the expression, "he is a grand, nice fellow, but there is a spice of conceit about him."

**SPICK AND SPAN.** Very neat and trim.

"A spick and span new gig at the door."—Halliburton.

**SPINSTER.** An unmarried woman. The reason that unmarried ladies are called spinsters is that formerly women were forbidden to marry until they had "spun" a complete set of bed linen.

**SPITAL.** An abbreviation of hospital.

**SPITE, DESPITE.** Despite comes from the old French *despit*, the Latin *despectus*, meaning a looking-down, a despising, and hence has become spite.

**SPLENDID.** This word literally means imposing and a splendid person is one who is imposing in appearance. "A splendid light" means a light that shines brilliantly. An heroic deed can also be called "a splendid deed." Strictly speaking, one cannot speak of fine weather, or a good story, as "splendid."

**SPOKE.** (Noun.) "To put a spoke into another's wheel" is to interfere with another's business or to interrupt him in his course of success. A spoke is a pin, and when solid wheels were used, a pin or a spoke was thrust into one of the holes made to receive it in order to skid the cart going down hill. Hence literally the phrase means to arrest a person in his progress.

**SPOON.** "To spoon" is to behave amorously towards a girl; to make love to; to woo. It conveys the idea of foolish fondness, and is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *sponan* (past participle *sponen*) meaning to entice or solicit. Hence the original meaning of spoon is "to be seductive or alluring in one's looks and manner, to woo." This is one of those words which has become very popular in England and is on the lips of everyone. A spoony means a silly person. "It is not nice on your part to spoon your girl in my presence" is an expression often heard in England.

**SPORT.** A colloquialism for sportsmen, as "He is a sport."

**SPORT, DISPORT.** Sport, which has been taken into the English language from foreign languages, is a shorter form of disport which itself is of French origin. To disport oneself literally means to carry oneself in a different direction from that of one's ordinary vocation, and hence disport, and sport came to signify pastime. The expression "to sport oneself" figuratively means to show oneself off.

**SPOT.** "To be on the spot" is to be thoroughly acquainted with some game, business or occupation: An officer is said to be on the spot when he is fully acquainted with his duties. A similar expression is to be "all there." "Off the spot" is the reverse.

**SPOUSE.** It comes from the Latin *spondeo*, I promise, and although it is applied to a married person, it really means a person promised in marriage—one betrothed.

**SPOUT.** "Up the spout." This expression means "with the pawnbroker."

**S.P.Q.R.** These words were inscribed on the standards of ancient Rome, meaning the Roman Senate and people. But now the modern shopkeeper uses them to signify "Small profits, quick returns."

**SPREE.** "To go on a spree." Formerly this phrase was used in a strong sense referring to indulgence in an excess of strong drink, but now it is simply used to denote "going on an outing for the day."

**SQUARE.** "On the square." This colloquial expression means "honest" and refers to one's reputation for fair dealing. "A square meal." "I had a square meal" means "I had a full meal which satisfied me." "To break no squares." To give no offence; to make no difference. "We will call it square." We will consider the matter settled with no further claims on either side. "Square toes." The Puritans wore shoes of this shape, and hence a person of strict morals is so called contemptuously. "I never shall forget the solemn remonstrances of our old square-toes of a rector at Hackham."—Thackeray.

**STAFF SYSTEM.** A system of safeguarding the traffic on single-line railways, according to which an engine driver is not allowed to move his train from the station at the end of one section of the line without having in his possession the "staff"—a sort of metal baton—belonging to the next section. The staff being given up again at the end of that section, it is brought back by a train going in the opposite direction. Thus there cannot be two trains on the same section at the same time.—Ross, *Technical and Scientific Terms*.

**STAIN, DISTAIN.** Stain is a shortening of distain, which comes from the old French *desteindre* meaning to take out the dye of anything.

**STAKE, STEAK.** A stake is a stick, or post; a steak is a slice of meat.

**STAMPEDE.** This word is used in England in the sense of "unconcerted movement of many persons by common impulse," as, there was a stampede in the direction of the winning-post at a race.

**STAND.** "Standing dish." An article of food which generally appears at table. "Stand to reason." The expression often used is "it stands to reason." The meaning is quite obvious. "To stand to his guns." A military phrase meaning not to give way. "Stand off." To keep at a distance. "Stand-offish" (society). A *noli me tangere* manner, that is, distant, reserved, not affable. From this adjective, we have the adverb "stand-offishly." "Stand out." To persist in one's statement. "To stand treat." To pay the expenses of a treat. "To stand Sam" (slang). To pay for refreshment, to treat to drink; to be surety for a person. "Stands." This word which is a verb in itself is often used for the auxiliary "is"; for instance, it stands recorded, he stands well affected towards me, and so on. This use of "stands" was very common in the Elizabethan period.

**STAPLE.** Formerly "staple" was the established place where any particular article was manufactured. Then it came to be applied to the thing manufactured. We now say "cotton

is the great staple of Manchester," but formerly they would have said that Manchester was the great staple of cotton.

**STARBOARD and LARBOARD.** In Saxon *bord* meant shield. In the Viking ships each warrior hung his shield on the side of the ship opposite to him, and above the aperture for his oar. The Viking held the steer oar which was fastened to the right-hand side of the stern (stern is itself a contraction of steer oar). The right-hand side of the ship thus became the steer side, and as *bord* came to mean the whole side where the shields or *bords* were hung, the right side came to be the steer *bord* (starboard) side, and the lower or lurking side became larboard.—Saxon's *Pocket Cyclopædia*.

**START.** "Start in." Slangily used for "to begin." "It is only a metaphor derived from lumbering operations, when men start into the woods in late autumn to begin the winter's work."

**STARVE.** Although the word "starve" is as a rule associated with the sense of dying from hunger, it is correctly used in such phrases as: "to starve with cold"; "to starve with love of another," &c.

**STATIONARY. STATIONERY.** Stationary is stagnant, said of a thing that remains in one position and does not move. Stationery consists of writing materials.

**STATUS QUO.** (Latin.) Literally the position in which. To place matters *in statu quo* is to place matters as they were at some time previously.

**STEAL MY THUNDER.** As to the origin of the phrase "steal my thunder" Disraeli has the following in his *Calamities of Authors*:—"The actors refused to perform one of John Dennis's tragedies to empty houses, but they retained some excellent thunder which Dennis had invented; it rolled one night when Dennis was in the pit, and it was applauded. Suddenly starting up, he cried to the audience, 'By —, they won't act my tragedy, but they steal my thunder.'"

**STEM THE TIDE.** Figuratively it means to check its onrush, panic, tumult. The Anglo-Saxon word *stemma* meant a stout cudgel and it is easy to imagine how one attacked by a mob could resist them with his *stemma* (staff).

**STEPSON.** The "step" in this word is the adjective *steop* meaning destitute or bereaved. So literally a stepson is one who is bereaved, that is, an orphan. It must be noted, however, that the adjective "step" does not retain its original sense in the word "stepfather" and "stepmother," because a stepfather or a stepmother are not themselves bereaved, but they have the custody of the bereaved children in the places of their father and mother. The expressions

"stepfather" and "stepmother" came into use after the word "step" had lost its original sense.

**STERLING.** This word has a double derivation, according to the sense in which it is used. The German merchants were called Easterlings, from their geographical relation to England, and the coins which the German merchants exchanged were so pure that England made that the standard for her coin which was called sterling. We use the expression "pound sterling." Then again, this word is used in the sense of unflinching or resolute, and in this case it is cognate with the old High German word *sturiline* meaning a (young) warrior.

**STEVEDORE.** One whose occupation is to load or unload ships.

**STICK.** "Stick it." Keep on at it. When you see a person busy doing anything, you say jocularly "That is right, stick it." "To stick one." To tolerate one. "I can't stick him" means "I can't stand him." "He is a stick-in-the-mud." He is a person without any spirit of enterprise. "To stick at." To be scrupulous about. He indulges in all sorts of vices, but he sticks at drinking. "To stick out." Not to submit. "To stick to one's colours." To be faithful to a cause. "He is a poor stick." He has no energy at all. "To stick on." To overcharge or to defraud, as, he asked me to give him a sovereign for that small article, and I knew he was sticking it on.

**STICKLER.** The original sense of the word stickler was that of seeing fair play, and the umpires used to hold sticks in their hands in duels to see that there was fair play on both sides. That is why the word stickler has been associated with stick or staff. Shakespeare uses it for one who parts combatants, and now we use it to signify a person who is fussy about trivial matters. It is probable that the word is derived from Middle English *stighlen*, to arrange, keep order.

**STIFF.** A low term for corpse.

**STILE, STYLE.** A stile is a step on the side of a wall to aid one in jumping over it; style is fashion.

**STIMULANT, STIMULUS.** The first signifies that which stimulates a system as whisky; the second denotes that which urges one on to do a thing, and hence a sort of impetus.

**STINK, STENCH.** It is interesting to note that in old English both these words were used to describe pleasant as well as unpleasant odours; thus it could be said in those days, "the rose stinks sweetly," or "this ointment has a pleasant stench." Now, of course, both these words only retain the latter

significance, viz., that of offensive odours. It may also be noted that the old German verb *stinken* which at one time was as wide in its meaning as the two English words, is now used in exactly the same sense as stench and stink. The word which has supplanted these two words is "smell" which is used in both senses as a verb and as a noun, and is centuries old. The origin of "smell" has not been traced yet.

**STINKER.** "Oh, what a stinker of a night." Oh what a beastly wet night.

**STIRRUP.** It is literally sty-rope, meaning mounting rope, from the Anglo-Saxon *stigan*, to mount, and *rap*, rope. We can trace the meaning of the word "sty" in "a sty in the eye" meaning literally a "rising" or "swelling" in the eye.

**STOMACH.** Appetite. Shakespeare uses this word with that meaning in *Henry V.* where he says "He who hath no stomach for this fight." It is also used in the sense of inclination; for instance, we read in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, "Let me praise you while I have the stomach." As a verb it means to swallow, to accept it with appetite, and this sense is retained in the phrase "to pocket an insult" meaning not to resent it. Where it means wrath, it comes from the Latin *stomachus*. "Stomachful" means stubborn, perverse, sullen, as one sometimes says, "he is a stomachful fellow."

**STONY-BROKE.** "He is stony-broke." Means he is hard up. A similar expression is "he is on the rocks." This expression is slang.

**STOP, STAY.** The difference between these two words is that stopping at a place does not cover the same length of time as staying at a place does. When you invite a person to stop with you, you do so only in a casual way, but when you ask him to stay with you, you do so in a friendly manner. One may stop at a place without staying in it during the course of one's journey. One when coming to England from India for the prosecution of his studies, stays in England, but on his way to England he may stop at several places.

**STOREY.** The word is derived from the old French *estorer*, and the Latin *instaurare*, meaning to build up. The word means built up, and so the ground floor of a house cannot be called the first storey.

**STRAIGHT.** As an adjective, it is used in the sense of "particular about morals," in England. "She is not straight," means "she is somewhat loose in morals." Americans use this word in a different sense. For instance, in America, "She is not straight" means "She is not frank enough to admit her faults."

**STRAW.** "My eyes draw straws." I am almost sleepy. "The last straw." An event which causes a final catastrophe. The proverb runs: "It is the last straw which breaks the camel's back." "A straw bid." In an auction sale it means a worthless bid. In such a case the bidder finds himself unable to pay for the article which is knocked down to him. "A man of straw." A man without means. Mr. McMordie in his book *English Idioms and How to Use Them*, is not right in saying that it means a mere puppet. (See under "Man.")

**STREET.** A street includes the houses that are built there, and therefore one cannot properly speak of a certain house being on a certain street. It is really in the street, because it is a part of that street. "The Street" is the market held outside the Stock Exchange after the Exchange is closed.

**STRIKE.** "To strike a bargain." To conclude a bargain. The reference is to the striking or shaking of hands over a concluded bargain. "To strike one's colours, or flag." To surrender. "To strike up a tune." To begin a tune on a musical instrument. "The band struck up" means literally struck up a tune, and hence, began to play. "To strike in." To put in a word abruptly, in the course of a conversation. A was relating a story to some of his friends, when B all of a sudden struck in with the remark, "I don't think so." "To strike oil." To make a lucky hit. The reference is to the finding of oil wells in America. "To strike sail." Literally to lower sail, hence, to eat humble pie, *i.e.* to acknowledge one's defeat. The reference is to a ship letting down her topsails in fight, *i.e.* submitting to her enemy. "To be struck down." To be victimised by. He was struck down with malaria. "To strike for." To endeavour to achieve a goal. Every Englishman strikes for his personal freedom.

**STRING.** For whatever purpose a piece of string is used, it should necessarily be strong, as the derivation implies. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *strang*, which means strong. "Always harping on one string." Always repeating the same thing. The allusion is to the old-time harpers who, in order to show their musical skill, played on one string. A similar expression is "never changing one's record," in which there is an allusion to the gramophone record.

**STUDY.** "A brown study." In a reverie, or in a dreamy mood. Ben Jonson writes: "Very common, even in educated society, but hardly admissible in writing, and therefore considered a vulgarity." It is derived, by a writer in *Notes and Queries*, from brow study, and he cites the old German *braun*, or *aug-braun*, an eyebrow.



**STUFF-GOWNSMAN.** A junior barrister who wears a gown of stuff. A senior barrister wears a gown of silk. (See "Taking the silk.")

**STUMP.** "To stump up." To pay what is due on the spot. Ready money is called "stumps" or "stumpy." It is a Cumbrian expression, and Dickens makes frequent use of it in his novels. "On the stump." On a lecturing tour. In America a person who lectures from the stump of a tree or from any other elevated place is called a stump orator. In England a mob-orator, such as one who harangues the people every Sunday in Hyde Park is so called. "To stump the country, or to take to the stump." To roam about the country, making public speeches. "To stir one's stumps." To get on faster. The stumps are the wooden legs fastened to stumps, or mutilated limbs. "Stumped out." Outwitted. This term is borrowed from the game of cricket. When a batsman leaves the crease to hit at a ball, and missing it, fails to regain the crease, the wicket-keeper puts the wicket down, and thus the batsman is stumped out.

**STYLE.** Figuratively used for manner of writing.

**SUB.** "*Sub rosa*." This is the Latin form of "under the rose" and it means 'in confidence.'

**SUBLIME PORTE (THE).** The Turkish Empire is so called from the gate (*porte*) of the Imperial Palace. In Eastern countries it was the custom to administer justice at the gates of King's palaces. This French form was adopted because at one time French was the language of European diplomacy.

**SUBMIT.** It literally means "to lower." In gladiatorial sports, the gladiator who acknowledged himself vanquished lowered (submitted) his arms to shew that he could fight no more.

**SUBORN.** (Latin, *sub-orno*.) This word was used in the sense of procuring the services of a person with a view to induce him to commit a crime. In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare makes Macduff speak of the attendants "suborned to murder Duncan." Now it is confined to perjury and treason only, as, for instance, "subornation of perjury."

**SUBPOENA.** This Latin term literally means "under penalty." A summons requiring a person to appear in a court of law to give evidence.

**SUBTLE.** It comes from the Latin *sub tela*, under a web, and this brings before our mind's eye the cunning and crafty spider, and its fine and delicate web. Hence the word not only means crafty, but fine and delicate. Suavile is used to express fineness, not dense, as

"The subtle dew in air begins to soar."—*Dryden*.

Shakespeare used the word "subtle" in the sense of smooth:—

"Like a bowl upon a subtle ground."—*Coriolanus*.

**SUCCINCT.** Literally undergirded, hence concise.

**SUCKER.** This is a slang term for a "sponger" or a "parasite," but it is so extremely low that any person with any pretensions to refinement would never dream of using it.

**SUFFRAGETTE.** The word *suffrage* in the English language comes from the Latin *suffragium*, meaning a vote. Hence a suffragette is a woman who agitates for female suffrage, that is, for "Votes for Women." This word is quite distinct from the word *Suffragist*, which means one who attaches importance to the suffrage, but does not resort to violent methods. It should be noted that in "suffragette" there is incorrect use of "ette."

**SUIT.** "To follow suit." To follow the leader. The term is taken from games of cards, in which the players follow suit. "Suiting to a T." Suiting perfectly, with the exactness indicated by a T-square.

**SULLEN.** In its earlier form it was *soleyn*, a doublet of solemn in the sense of morose. Shakespeare says "customary suits of solemn black" and also "put on sullen black incontinent." Milton describes the "solemn curfew" as "swinging slow with sullen roar" in *Penseroso*.

**SULTRY.** It is a contracted form of the older word *sweltery*, which comes from the verb to swelt. Chaucer says "the Knights swelt for lack of shade."

**SUN.** "She is a little sun-beam" i.e. she is so bright and cheery that she makes others feel likewise. "Sun-up, sun-down." American expressions for sunrise and sunset. "Sun-downer." It is an Australian term applied to a tramp who purposely arrives at a farm at a very late hour in the evening, so that he can get food and avoid doing any work.

**SUNDAY.** Anglo-Saxon *Sunnan-daeg*, day of the Sun.

**SUP.** "To sup with Pluto." To die. Pluto was the Roman god in charge of the departed spirits in the nether regions.

**SUPERCILIOUS.** Comes from the Latin *supercilium*, meaning having an elevated eye-brow, hence a supercilious person is one who is haughty and contemptuous towards others.

**SUPERSTITION.** That which stands over, or survives or lingers after an opinion has been exploded. It comes from the Latin *superstus*.

**SUPPLICATION.** It comes from the Latin *sub-plico*, literally the act of folding the knees. Although supplication now signifies an earnest entreaty or prayer, the Romans used the word for a thanksgiving after a victory.

**SURE.** At one time this word meant affianced or betrothed. Sir T. More says "The King was sure to Dame Elizabeth Lucy."

**SURLY.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *sur*, meaning sour, and *lic*, meaning like. Thus it literally means "sour like."

**SURROUND.** This word has now altered its meaning, having been associated with "round." Its original meaning was to overflow, from old French *suronder*, and Latin *superundare*, meaning to overflow.

**SWAN.** "Swan-song." When a writer or a speaker anticipates his death in his last writing or speech, that is said to be his swan-song. It takes its origin from the poetic fable of the swan singing when nearing its death. "Swan of Avon." Shakespeare is so called from his having been born at Stratford-on-Avon.

**SWANK.** Although this word has marched into English in such a triumphant manner, its etymology cannot be accounted for, nor can one explain satisfactorily why this really ugly word should have been allowed to march in in this manner. In the English language there is a dialect word "swank," to strut, which may be connected in some way with the Scotch word "swankie," a strapping youth:—"I am told, young *swankie*, that you are roaming the world to seek your fortune."—(*Monastery*, ch. 24). As noun it means a boaster, as, he is a swank, and as verb it is used to signify to boast or to brag, as, he swanks a lot. It has quite recently come into use, and is very commonly used in England.

**SWEAR.** "To swear off." To give up, used intransitively. I invited him to a drink, but he resolutely refused, saying he had sworn off. "To swear like a trooper." To make free use of profane language. Soldiers as a rule are given to that sort of language, and hence the expression. "Swear by my sword." This phrase occurs in *Hamlet*, and *Winter's Tale*.

**SWEAT.** Sweater. An overtime worker. "Sweated industry." One which pays miserable pittance to workmen, but provides the public with cheap articles, and the dealer with huge profits. Hood, in his "Song of the Shirt" was the first man to protest against this "wretched traffic."

**SWEEPSTAKE.** In a game of cards, a man who wins all the tricks or stakes. It also means a prize at a race.

**SWEET.** "To be sweet on a person." To have a fancy for, or to be attached to a person, as, he is sweet on her. "He has a sweet tooth." He is fond of sweetmeats.

**SWELL.** Same as "swank." Thackeray in his novel *Pendennis* calls Pendennis "a swell." "Swelled head" (slang). This expression is applied to a man who is so puffed up with his own success that he becomes arrogant in his manner.

**SWIM.** "In the swim." "In society." The upper crust of society. An angler's phrase. A lot of fish gathered together

is called a swim, and when an angler can pitch his hook in such a place, he is said to be "in a good swim." To know persons in the swim is to know society folk, who always congregate together."—Dr. Brewer.

**SWINDLE.** If the Anglo-Saxon word *spindan* can be taken as the derivation of this word, then "swindle" has altered its meaning. *Swindan* means to droop, and this might imply servility. An obsequious drooping to the ground. Originally "swindle" meant cheating in trade, or trafficking.

**SWING.** "To swing." To suffer the consequence. "I will do you in, and swing for you," means "I will do you some injury, and then shall suffer for it." "Do you in" usually conveys the idea of fatal injury.

**SWINGEBUCKLER.** It is an old cant word, meaning a man who pretends to feats of arms, a bully. The word came into use from the practice of "blades" (nuts) of London assembling together with sword and buckler during the reign of Queen Elizabeth for mock fights.

**SWORD.** "Sword of Damocles." Any imminent evil, such as death. Damocles was asked by Dionysius, known as the Tyrant, to mount his throne. While so doing, Damocles saw a sword hanging over his head by a single hair, and he was so terrified that he implored the King there and then to release him from his fancied bliss.

**SWORN BROTHERS.** Formerly when an invasion was undertaken, it was customary among the soldiers to take mutual oaths to share the reward of their services. Thus in time the term "sworn brothers" came to be applied to those who committed acts of iniquity with each other's aid, because by so doing, they could share the proceeds of their guilt.

**SYCOPHANT.** The word comes from the Greek *sykon*, a fig, and *phainein*, to bring to light. When figs were imported against the established law in Greece, at that time there were some mean fellows who impeached those who broke that law, and these were called Government toadies. Hence a sycophant is a toady, or an idle flatterer generally.

**SYMPATHISE WITH, SYMPATHY FOR (or WITH).** The word sympathise always takes the preposition "with," whereas the noun "sympathy" takes the prepositions "with," or "for." When sympathy is used in the sense of compassion, it takes the preposition "for," as, "to have sympathy for one's distress," but when it is used in a general sense, it takes the preposition "with," as "to have sympathy with another in his aspirations."

**SHYSTER.** (American.) A fellow who hangs about Courts of Justice or Police Offices, pretending to be a lawyer and thus practising in these Courts as lawyer, though he has

never been admitted to the Bar. Hence the word "shyster," which is a generic term of contempt, has come to mean a swindler or a vagabond. A briefless lawyer is also called a shyster. The derivation of this word is uncertain.

## T.

**TA.** As we all have been children once, every one of us is familiar with the nursery terms "pa" "ma" &c., and "ta" is one of them. It would be too much for a lisping babe to say "Thank you," whereas "ta" would drop from the infant's mouth quite easily and naturally. Thus "ta" by itself forms a sentence "I thank you," and it is familiarly used also by the grown-ups.

**TAB.** "An old Tab." An old maid: an old cat or tabby. An old maid is so called because she usually makes a tabby (cat) her companion.

**TABLE.** "*Table d'hôte.*" This French phrase literally means "the host's table," and we use it in the sense of a dinner of courses, as printed on the menu, and for which a fixed charge is made. This is distinguished from *à la carte*, that is, selecting your own dish from the table and paying accordingly for each course. In proportion *à la carte* comes more expensive in the end. "Upon the table." A matter of public discussion, and consequently, known to every one. Questions which are to be asked in Parliament have to be put upon the table in a printed form. "Turning the tables." Reversing the circumstances by turning a person's arguments against himself. The Romans bought magnificent tables at very expensive prices, and whenever they charged their wives with being extravagant, the latter turned the tables on their husbands by reminding them of the huge prices they paid for their tables.

**TABOO.** "To taboo" is to prohibit. When a book is proscribed it is said to be "tabooed." A "tabooed man" is a man in disgrace. He is generally said to be in bad odour with others. This word comes from the Polynesian *tabu* meaning "sacred," "holy," and to declare a thing tabooed is really to shield it against profanation. But we totally disregard the sacred signification of this word and use it in the sense of "banning a thing," for instance, when vegetarians taboo flesh meat it means that they condemn it.

**TAIL.** (Law.) This term is applied to an estate limited to a person and heirs of his body. The estate so limited is called estate tail. The word "tail" in this sense comes from the French *taille*, a cutting or shred.

**TAKE.** "To take a back seat." A parliamentary phrase meaning "to be set aside." With villains conscience takes a back seat. "Takes the cake," "takes the biscuit" or "takes the bun." All these phrases mean taking the prize. "Taking the biscuit" has become a classical phrase, expressive of a satirical reward or recognition."—*John Bull*. "To take up one's connections." It originated in an American University and it means to leave college. "To take in." To cheat, but Shakespeare uses it in the sense of conquering. "To take after." To resemble. "To take the field." A general who commences operations against the enemy is said to take the field. In cricket the side coming out to field first is said to take the field. In racing when a man stakes his money against the favourite, he takes the field. "To take on." To grieve. "To take up for a person." To defend or protect a person. "To take up." To reprove.

**TAKING.** "Taking the stage." (Theatrical.) Literally going from one side of the stage to the other, and hence, assuming a commanding position. It is an artifice and one which requires a very skilful artist to carry it out with effect. "Taking French leave." Going off secretly. This expression came into use when England and France had a very poor opinion of each other's manners, so much so that the French had a corresponding phrase "to depart like the English." "In a terrible taking." Greatly agitated. When asked to explain, he suddenly burst out in a terrible taking. "Taking silk." To become King's Counsel. When a junior barrister after ten years' practice becomes a King's Counsel, he changes his ordinary robe for one made of silk, and is, therefore, said to be taking silk. He can never plead in any case without a junior, and the Crown has the first call upon him. "Taking time by the forelock." "Time is painted with a lock before, and bald behind; signifying thereby that we must take time by the forelock; for when it is once past, there is no recalling it."—Swift. "To take in tow." To tow a ship is to draw it along by two lines; hence figuratively, it means to take under guidance or to be a guide to another. "To take mourning." To attend Church the Sunday after a funeral. "Taking on." A woman in hysterical fits or hysterics is said to be taking on. It also means to fret over something, or to take a thing to heart and grieve over it. Come on, old fellow, cheer up, and don't take on so. "To take the bull by the horns." This colloquial expression means to grapple undauntedly with a difficulty that lies in one's way. If you have any difficulty to meet with, don't dally with it, but take the bull by the horns. "To take part with," "to take part in." You take part with a person and you take part in a thing. I took part with him in the discussion. "To take well." To take well with, is to "catch on," or "to be acceptable to." When the phrase

"take well" stands alone, the words "with people" are understood. The performance took well, that is, it took well with the audience and consequently was approved of and applauded. When a thing "catches on," it means that it catches on the public and therefore, comes into vogue; when a thing "takes well" it is pleasing and therefore acceptable. "To take the measure of one." To form a correct estimate of a person after studying him carefully. When a man is eaten up with conceit, he can be taught his measure. "To take a telling." To receive admonition in good grace. Those schoolboys who take a telling from their schoolmasters patiently never fail to profit by it. "To take up with." To be friendly with and generally to become attached. She is very particular whom she takes up with. "Take from a Spaniard all his good qualities, and there remains a Portuguese." This Spanish saying is characteristic of the Spaniards' contempt for their peninsular neighbours. According to the Spaniard, the poor Portuguese have no good qualities in them.

**TALE.** Originally it was used in the sense of tallying, that is, counting. Milton in the following lines in his *L'Allegro* :—

"And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the vale"

does not allude to any love-tale between lovers, but what he means is that every shepherd counts his flock to know if they tally with the proper number that should be in the flock. Dryden also uses it in the same sense in the following line :—

"She takes the tale of all the lambs."

"Tale of a Tub" (A). Dean Swift wrote a religious satire under that name, and now it is figuratively applied to a rignmarole or to any idle fiction.

**TALENT.** This word should not be used for "talents" or ability. The expression "the talent," in racing phraseology means "the ring." The use of this word in the sense of ability is taken from the parable in Matthew XXV. 14-30. "Talent money." When a cricket professional exceeds a certain figure either in bowling or batting feats, he gets "talent money." "Talented." This word is formed on the same principle as gifted, bigoted, &c., and the use of it has been decried as a vile Americanism. Coleridge in his *Table Talk* strongly condemns the use of it. The word, however, is an old one and it has been revived.

**TALK.** "To talk" (stable). This is said of a horse that roars. The expression "tall talk" came into England from America and has now become quite common. "To talk through one's neck." (Australian.) Talking foolishly, that is, not talking through one's head (sensibly). The common expression in

• England is "you are talking through the back of your neck."  
 "Talking fustian." Indulging in bombast and high-sounding words. Origin doubtful. "Talked out." (Parliamentary.) Explained by illustration. "After having passed its second reading last session by a substantial majority, the Scottish Home Rule Bill was this session 'talked out.'" *Reynolds's Newspaper*, May 17, 1914. "Talkee-Talkee." The termination "ee" sounds Chinese, and it is borrowed in ridicule. Talkee-talkie means any amount of talk without any good results. The broken English of negroes is called talkee-talkie.

**TALL.** Originally "tall" referred to height, but as the ancients assumed that tall men should always be brave, they used it to signify "brave." Grafton in *Chronicle* and Fuller in *The Holy War* used this word in the sense of "brave." Strictly speaking this word should only be applied to something that grows, as, a tall man, a tall tree. Shakespeare too used it in the sense of "brave," "valiant" in *Henry V.* :—

"Thy spirits are most tall."

Beaumont and Fletcher too also use this word in its original sense when they say: "We fought like honest and tall men." As applied to a story, it means incredible, and as applied to a pedestrian, it signifies a great rate of speed.

**TALLER.** (Of a bank.) This is a corruption of "tallier," that is "tallyman," the functionary of a bank who receives and pays bills, orders and so on.

**TALLY.** It is derived from the Latin *talea*, a slip of wood, and a "tally" was a notched stick employed by the working classes as a means of keeping accounts. This was in use two hundred years ago and this shows how ignorant of book learning the working classes were at that time. The notches made in this stick were of various sizes, small ones signifying pence, larger shillings, and still larger pounds. Even the tallies were used in the Exchequer and were only abolished in 1834. "To live tally" means to live together as man and wife without being legally married, as a tallyman is one who keeps a mistress and a tallywoman is a concubine.

**TALLYMAN.** A travelling draper who calls at private houses and sells his wares on the "tally" system, that is, part payment on account, and the remainder when the man calls again.

**TAME-CATS.** This term is very correctly and beautifully defined by the *Saturday Review* :—"There is a class of men who are not at all young by any means, who in society are termed 'tame cats'; these men present rather a ludicrous spectacle for their foolishness. They are by no means vicious but they are by no means manly. They continue to attend



all entertainments till they are well on in the sere and yellow leaf; they have no occupations; they are neither men of letters nor of arts; they are not political; and, last of all, they are in no way sportsmen, neither shooting, hunting, driving nor fishing. The *raison d'être* of their existence seems hard to define; their daily occupation is wandering round from house to house, and exchanging gossip and scandal with old ladies and young alike. They have the *entrée* to many houses where they are welcome at all times, and are not looked upon as eligible husbands for the daughters of the house; they are made use of to fill up vacancies at dinner, theatre parties, &c. and, above all, they are essentially good-natured."

**TAN.** To beat, or to thrash. There is a Hindustani word *tanna* meaning "abuse," and in my opinion the English word "tan" is related to it. Tanning means a beating.

**TANDEM.** In the sense of its being applied to two horses, one behind the other, it had its origin in University slang. Such an equipage was so called because the Latin word *tandem* means "at length."

**TANGLE-FOOTED.** It means "drunk" from the fact of a drunken man entangling his feet together while attempting to walk.

**TANK.** It is an Anglo-Indian word and is the Portuguese *tanque* meaning a pool or cistern.

**TANNER.** (Slang.) A sixpence.

**TAP.** "To tap the Admiral." To bore a hole secretly through a spirit cask and suck the liquor from it by means of a straw. The reference is to an Admiral who, having died on board a ship, and as he wished to be buried at home, his body was preserved in a cask filled with spirits. There was an Irish marine on the same ship and no one could account for his being continually drunk, until he was compelled to confess where he got the liquor from. His confession was that he had been so hard up for a drink that he had "tapped the Admiral." Naturally the Admiral was left high and dry, and *The Slang Dictionary* published by Chatto and Windus (London) says that the body was believed to be that of Nelson.

**TAPIS.** "On the tapis." Under discussion. *Tapis* is French for carpet.

**TAR.** "All tarred with the same brush." It means "all sheep of the same flock" that is, all alike to blame. The allusion is to the custom of distinguishing the sheep of any given flock by a common mark with a brush dipped in tar.—Dr. Brewer. "Tarring and Feathering." This form of punishment originated with Richard I. Any robber voyaging with the Crusaders was first shaved, then boiling pitch was poured

upon his head and a cushion of feathers shaken over it. In America this form of punishment is practised extensively, and is common among seamen of all nations. "Jack-tar." Sailor.

**TARIFF.** This word comes from the Moorish name (*Tarifa*) for a fortress which stands upon a promontory of Spain, commanding the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. When the Moors had possession they levied duties at certain fixed rates upon all merchandise passing in or out of the Straits. These duties from the name of the places where they were levied, were called *tarifa* or "tariff" from whence we have acquired the word.—Trench.

**TART.** Originally a schoolboy slang, probably an abbreviation of tartar, but there seems little doubt that the term is from a simile between a jam-tart and a sweet girl, as is borne out by the fact that formerly one's mistress was called "my little bit of jam." This word is also applied to a girl with whom one has been casually intimate and even to a wife, and it has always been open to question whether the word carries with it an insinuation of bad character. Some time ago an actress brought an action against the *Sporting Times* for calling her a tart, and this certainly does not encourage one to view this term in a favourable light. As a matter of fact this word is now commonly applied in London to a girl or woman of immoral character.

**TARTAR.** "To catch a tartar." To capture one who proves to be a troublesome prisoner, or to get hold of something which one would only be too willing to give up afterwards. A husband whose wife turns out to be a troublesome cantankerous woman is said to have "caught a tartar."

**TASTY, TASTEFUL.** Tasty is used for food only in the sense of pleasant to the palate. Tasteful is used either for a person or for his work.

**TA-TA.** Familiar expression for "Good-bye."

**TATTOO.** It is the beat of drum at night calling soldiers to quarters. It comes from the Dutch word *taptoo* signifying the time when gin-shops are closed.

**TAUTOLOGY, PLEONASM.** Tautology comes from the Greek and means "the same words or words of the same signification." Hence repetition or repeated use of the same word or words of the same signification is tautology. A repetition of this kind made in different words is called a pleonasm.

**TAVERN, TABERNACLE.** It is singular that both these words are derived from the same root. They both originate in the Latin *taberna*, a tent, hut or booth.

**TAWDRY.** It is said to be a corruption of St. Audrey and was originally applied to the fair laces and gay toys sold at

St. Audrey's Fair. It now signifies any paltry show and vain splendour.

**TAX-COLLECTOR.** In America a "road-agent" is so-called. In England a highwayman is so named from his practice of forcibly extracting money or anything of value from his victims. The poor tax-collector is never viewed with a friendly eye, because, as a rule, people do not like paying taxes.

**TEA.** This is a corruption of the Chinese equivalent *tackai*. Formerly it was pronounced "tay" in English and then it took the form of "tea." Tea was first brought to Europe by the Dutch in 1610 and introduced into England in 1650. Pepys in his *Diary* under date of September 26th, 1661, has the following entry :—"I sent for a cup of tea, a China drink of which I had never drunk before." "Tea-fight." Slang for tea-party or evening party, as, I am going to a tea-fight this afternoon.

**TEAM.** Two or more persons associated for some purpose, e.g. a football side, a cricket, eleven, a coach's pupils &c. (Properly of animals harnessed together.) Hence "teamwork," work in company.—Farmer and Henley, *Dictionary of Slang and Colloquial English*. Strictly speaking a "team of beasts" is two or more beasts harnessed together, but in the United States the meaning is extended to accessories also such as harness, vehicle &c.

**TEAPOT STROKE (A).** (Cricket.) A poor stroke hit up in the air and caught easily.

**TEC.** It is a contraction of detective and it means a detective.

**TE DEUM.** This ancient hymn of praise beginning with the Latin words "*Te Deum laudamus*" literally means "We praise Thee, O God." It is not an everyday hymn of praise but is sung on special occasions as a thanksgiving in commemoration of a victory or any other propitious occurrence.

**TEETOTAL.** This word is a reduplicated form of "total" by way of emphasis. The term originated with R. Turner, of Preston, who in 1833 at a temperance meeting asserted that nothing but *te-te-total* will do. The "Tee-total Hotel" means a prison.

**TELEGRAPH.** It literally means "to write from a distance"; telegram, the writing itself, executed from a distance. It is formed of the Greek *telos*, afar off, and *grapho*, I write. "Milking a telegram" is making a surreptitious use of the message which is sent to another specific party.

**TELESCOPE.** It literally means "I see at a distance" from the Greek *telos*, afar off, and *skopeo*, I see.

**TELLER.** (Pugilistic.) A severe blow that tells, i.e., has its effect. This term also signifies any of four persons appointed (two for each party) to count votes in the House of Commons.

**TEMPER.** Originally it meant "temperament" and now the sense of the word could be understood from its application, for instance, when we say "What a temper he has" it means that he easily flies into a rage. Even in the above sentence the sense of the original meaning "temperament" is conveyed. "Temper, anger, wrath." Temper is constitution or disposition of the mind and hence refers to temperament; anger is violent passion and is due to insult or injury, real or imaginary; wrath is deep-seated and lasting. When a man is in wrath he gives vent to his feelings, but when a man is in anger, he may not do so.

**TEN.** "The Upper Ten." People of distinction. N. P. Willis, when speaking of the cream of New York society that did not exceed ten thousand in number, coined this phrase. Other similar expressions are "The upper crust," "The quality," and "Great folk."

**TENANT FOR LIFE.** (Slang.) A married man, i.e., possessed of a woman for life.

**TENDER.** Some people use "tender" instead of "give." But we tender a payment and give a reception. "Tender-foot." (American.) One who is new to the country and hence a new-comer. As an adjective it means raw, inexperienced as a novice, from the idea of tender feet of babies who are not accustomed to walk. Similar expressions are: "A greenhorn"; "A country bumpkin"; "A griffin."

**TENNIS ELBOW.** A painful elbow, which is the result of back-hand strokes in the game of tennis.

**TENSE.** When it is part of a verb, indicating time of action, it comes from the Latin *tempus*, time; but when it means stretched tight or rigid, it comes from the Latin *tensus*, past participle of *tendere*, to stretch. There was a tense pause. From this adjective we get the noun "tension."

**TENTER-HOOKS.** "Tenter" is from the Latin *tentus*, stretched. The woven cloth is stretched or tented by means of hooks passed through the edges and the hooks so used are called tenter-hooks. Figuratively "on tenter-hooks" means to be in a state of worry and anxiety, for instance, when one says that one is on tenter-hooks it signifies that one's curiosity is on the full stretch. A tent is a piece of canvas stretched, coming as it does from the Latin *tentus* meaning stretched.

**TERM, EXPRESSION.** Term comes from *terminus* meaning a boundary and signifies any word that has a limited meaning; while expression signifies any word which conveys forcible meaning.

**TERM-TIME.** It means Law Sessions, which are four. Michaelmas Session begins on November 2nd and ends

December 21st; Hilary Session begins on January 11th and ends the Wednesday before Easter. Easter Session begins the Tuesday after Easter week and ends the Friday before Whit Sunday. Trinity Session begins the Tuesday after Whitsun week and ends August 8th.

**TERMAGANT.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *tyr* meaning very, and *magan*, mighty. It was originally applied to a turbulent, violent man but now it is exclusively applied to a boisterous, brawling woman, i.e., a woman of ill-tongue and brawling tongue. In the old Romances the word "termagant" was applied to the God of the Saracens. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare uses the term for a ranting actor overdoing his part.

**TERRIER.** It comes from the Latin *terra*, earth. Hence a terrier is a dog used in the chase and his office is to follow into the earth such animals as foxes, badgers, rabbits, &c. who burrow.

**TEST.** This word in the sense of "trying the value of" was given rise to by Shakespeare's phrase "Tested gold." A few years ago however it was regarded as an Americanism.

**TESTIMONY, EVIDENCE.** The word "testimony" comes from the Latin *testis* meaning a witness, and it is the evidence of witnesses; evidence in the legal sense of the word includes all those means by which any alleged matter of fact, the truth of which is in question, is proved or disproved. The testimony of a person that he saw a man jumping from the balcony of his house is his evidence, but the traces which that man leaves behind on the balcony, are the evidence of the fact in question.

**TEXT.** This word has the same derivation as the word "textile," viz., the Latin *textus* meaning that which is woven and hence text really means a fabric. It is curious to note that now it is applied to anything written or quoted.

**THEN.** As an adjective as in "the then principal of the Forman Christian College, Lahore, India," its use is condemned. Usage however sanctions it.

**THENCE, WHENCE.** These words mean "from there," "from where," and hence should not be preceded by the preposition "from."

**THERE-YOU-ARE, HERE-YOU-ARE.** When in a discussion one happens to light upon the right point, the other exclaims "there you are," i.e., you have got it, that's the right point. When you say "Here you are" to a person, you mean that here is the thing wanted or asked for. The thing required may be handed on the spot or sent from elsewhere.

**THICK..** "Thick-skinned." Not sensitive to rebuke or reproach. "Thick-headed," "Thick-skulled," "Thick-witted." All these expressions mean stupid. "Through thick and thin." Under all conditions. It conveys the idea of "fesculutely." We also use the expression "thick and thin supporters."

**THINGS.** Trench says, "By things I mean subjects, as well as objects of thought, whatever one can think about." Tooke says, "A thing is whatever may be thought of."

**THINK, SUPPOSE.** Think comes from the Hebrew *dan*, to direct or judge. It is a generic term, and refers to past, present or future. Supposition denotes the putting of one's thoughts in the place of reality. Thinking denotes holding a pronounced opinion without being absolutely convinced of it.

**THIS DAY SIX MONTHS.** This Parliamentary term signifies an indefinite period of postponement. If a bill is proposed to be read "this day six months" it virtually means that it has met with final dismissal.

**THOUGHT, REFLECTION, MEDITATION.** Thought is the thing thought. Reflection is the turning back or upon one's self. Meditation is the brooding over ideas.

**THRALL.** Trench suggests that this word is another form of "drill" in allusion to the custom of drilling (boring holes in) the ears of a slave in token of servitude. But more probably it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *throegian*, to run, in which case a thrall would mean a runner or a messenger, whence a servant, a slave. It also appears that thrall is a variant of thrill which in its turn is allied to drill, meaning to pierce, to perforate. Hence the sensation caused by the drilling of the ears is a thrilling sensation.

**THREE.** "Three-ply." A Mormon having three wives. This is an American term. "The three R's." "A familiar way of referring to reading, (w)riting and (a)rithmetic."

**THRESHOLD.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *Therscan*, to thrash, and *wald* or *weald*, a wood, so literally it means the thrash-wood, that is, the wood beaten by the feet of those who enter the house. Properly it means the door-sill, but figuratively it signifies the beginning of anything, as, "The threshold of Life"; "The threshold of an argument"; "The threshold of the Inquiry."

**THRIFT-BOX.** A box in which thrifts (savings) are put or laid by for a rainy day.

**THROUGH.** "Through a side-door." An illegitimate child is slangily said to have come through a side door.

**THROW.** "To throw up the sponge." To retire from a contest in a hopeless condition. In old prize-fighting days,

the seconds threw up the sponge into the air when either fighter was in such a hopeless condition as to be unable to carry on the contest. "To throw up a maiden." (Cricket). To bowl an over without giving a single run to the batsman, excluding the "extras" which consist of "byes" and "leg-byes." "To throw off the belt." (American). To stop a machine by throwing the strap or the belt off the wheels of the machine. Figuratively it means to cause anything to cease, as, Oh, just throw off the belt, and stop your wheels, *i.e.*, cease talking. "To throw out a feeler." To say or do something by means of which to find out how others think and feel about the matter. Certain insects have the habit of feeling before them with feelers (antennæ) which enables them to discover by touch what is lying in front of them and hence the phrase. "To throw the handkerchief." To choose a wife. The allusion is to the choosing of women by the Sultan of his harem in this fashion. "Throw your eye on." Give a glance at. This expression occurs in Shakespeare's *King John*.

**THUD.** *The Times* newspaper first used this word in describing the pugilistic fight between Heenan and Sayers.

**THUMP.** To strike or beat with something thick or heavy: figuratively to knock up. This term is used in cricket of a batsman who hits the ball hard to the delight of the spectators. "He thumped four after four moving the spectators to great excitement."—*Daily Express*. This is characteristic of the famous hitter, G. I. Jessop.

**THUNDERER.** "The Thunderer." This term by which *The Times* is designated, was originally applied to Captain Edward Sterling, one of the most powerful writers ever employed on that paper.

**THUNDERING.** (Colloquial.) It means large, great, as "a thundering lie"; "thundering nuisance," &c.

**THURSDAY.** (Anglo-Saxon *Thunresdæg*). Day of Thor, the God of Thunder.

**THWART.** From "athwart" meaning across, so when we thwart a person we put an obstacle "across" his path. "Crossed" in love means "thwarted" in love.

**TICK.** "In a tick." In a moment, as, I shall be back in a tick. The expression is colloquial and no doubt the reference is to the "tick, tick" of the clock. Similar expressions are: "In a jiffy"; "In half a mo" (moment). "On tick." The expression "on tick" means on credit or trust, as, he buys his tobacco on tick. The word "tick" in this expression is a corruption of "ticket," and formerly tradesmen's bills were written on tickets or cards. It is used colloquially, though I have often seen it in

standard law books. Carter in his *Elements of the Law of Contract*, writes:—"If a servant usually buys for the master upon tick and the servant buys some things without the master's order, yet if the master were trusted by the trader the master is chargeable."

**TICKET.** "That is the ticket." That is what is wanted or what is best. The expression "That is the ticket" is either a corruption of "that is etiquette," by adding "th" to the first "e" of "etiquette," or has got to do with "ticket," which means a bill or invoice. (See Etiquette.) "What is the ticket?" What is to be done? literally it means, What is the programme? "What is the ticket on it" (American)? What is the price of it? "To go on a ticket." (American.) To adopt the policy of; to be in favour of. The idea conveyed in this expression is that of making a thing one's policy. Mr. Redmond can be said to be going on the Home Rule ticket. "Ticket night." (Theatrical.) This is the night on which the friends of the supers (supernumerary actors) are allowed to buy tickets on the understanding that it is some advantage to the supers who are entitled to a percentage on the receipts.

**TICKLE.** "Tickled to death." This phrase is used to express "greatly pleased." But there can be no doubt that the phrase is absurd.

**TIDE.** There can be little doubt that this is another form of "time" coming as it does from the Anglo-Saxon *tid* signifying time, hour. The old saying "Time and tide wait for no man" bears testimony to this and it is from the same source that we have the words "tide" and "tidings." Tidy literally means in time, in season, for instance, Tusser has the phrase "If the weather be fine and tidy," meaning seasonable. Everything that is done in good time is well-done and neatly arranged which is the exact meaning of "tidy." Tidings literally means "things that betide."

**TIFFIN.** (Anglo-Indian.) Luncheon. The origin of this word comes from "tiff" which in the North of England means a draught of liquor, and "tiffing" meaning drinking or eating between meal times. According to G. A. Sala, this word is in common use in hotel advertisements in South Africa. "To tiff" means to take luncheon.

**TIGHT.** This is tied, ti'd, tight. A person who has got "boozy" is tight, so is one who is "hard up" or short of money.

**TIGHTENER.** A hearty meal. "To do a tightener" is to eat heartily.

**TILL.** As used in the sense of a money-drawer it is supposed by some to be derived from the name of Mr. William Till who was a coin-collector in 1814. Though admirable in



itself, this origin is squashed by the fact that the word "till" is to be found in Bailey's Dictionary of 1742, from which we can conclude that it comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *tille* meaning a division or compartment.

**TIME.** Cabman's slang for money. If his fare has come to 4s. 6d. he says "half-past four," if 8s. 9d. he says "quarter to nine" and so on. This is undoubtedly making a full use of the old adage "Time is money," and cab-drivers boast that even the police cannot comprehend their system. "To know the time of day." To be wide awake. The allusion is to teaching a child how to tell the time from a clock. Compare the expression "To know what's o'clock." "Heaps of time." It is an expression which one often hears in London. But "plenty of time" is better than "heaps of time," which should not be used. "At the same time," "In the same time." When two people arrive at one place from two different places at the same hour, they are said to arrive at the same time. In the same time refers to the same space of time occupied by their respective journeys.

**TIN.** Slang for money, as, he has got plenty of tin. "Tin-pot." Low; mean; worthless, as, "A tin-pot game," "a tin-pot company." A piano out of tune and producing jarring notes is slangily called a tin-pot.

**TINKER.** "Tinker's damn." Colloquially used for something worthless, or of no value. It is usually used in the phrase "Not worth a tinker's damn." Tinker is a small standard of value, and damn is equivalent to curse. "Tinker's news." It means stale news, just as they have the term "piper's news" in Scotland. The idea is that owing to the peregrinatory habits of these people, the information which they supply soon gets stale.

**TIP.** In the turf phraseology it means special information concerning betting on a horse, and from this we have "tipster" and "tipper." The straight tip means an absolute cert. (certainty) and it may come direct from the owner or the trainer of a horse. To give a tip to a waiter is to give him a gratuity. To give one a friendly tip in time is to give one a friendly bit of advice in time, as "take my tip and don't do anything of the sort." A tipster is one who professes to give tips about races.

**TIP-TOP.** Of the best kind, first rate. "One of those tip-top firms in the City would have gone straight off to take counsel's opinion."—Miss Braddon.

**TIP-TOPPER.** A gentleman, one of the best class. A similar expression is "topper."

**TIRE.** "Born-tired." A man who is constantly making excuses when he is disinclined to do a thing, is said to be born-tired.

**TIP-FOR-TAT.** An equivalent; just retaliation; blow for blow. It is a corruption of "tip for tap," tip means a slight tap.

**TITAN.** A gigantic person either in physique or intellect. The Titans, in Greek mythology, were demigods of great stature.

**TITTLE-TATTLE.** This is a reduplicated form of "tattle," and it means empty prattle; idle, trifling talk.

**TOBACCONIST.** Originally this term meant the smoker of tobacco, and not the seller, as it does now. Burton in "The Anatomy of Melancholy" uses it in that sense.

**TOCO.** (Slang.) Punishment; pain.

**TOFF.** Swell.

**TOGGED-OUT (or UP).** Vulgarly used for "attired in clothes that may attract attention" or "well-dressed."

**TOLL.** "To toll a bell" is simply to tell (count) a knell on a bell. At one time it was customary to sound the Church bell on the death of a person in order to invite the neighbours to join in prayers for the peace of the departed soul. To indicate the age and sex, nine tolls were for a man, six for a woman, and three for a child by a peculiar ring.

**TOLLS, CUSTOMS, EXCISE.** Tolls are charges for special privileges such as passing on horseback over a particular road, which is, as a rule, used by wayfarers. Customs is legally assessed duty levied on imported or exported goods. Excise is a charge on certain commodities of home production.

**TOM.** "Old Tom." Strong kind of gin. "Tom-boy." A girl who romps about like a boy is so called. "Tomfool." Thundering fool.

**TOMAHAWK.** It is a North American Indian word, and is used to designate a war hatchet. It was customary to go through the ceremony of burying the tomahawk when peace was made, hence "burying the hatchet" meant peacemaking.

**tone, TUNE.** Both these come from the same Greek word meaning a thing stretched, that is, a string or note, but there is a difference between them. The tone of a piano is the sound produced by its keys, and the tune of a song is its refrain or the note in which it is sung.

**TONEY.** A vulgar expression for stylish or fancy.

**TONIC.** This word comes from the Latin *tonus*, tone—a condition in which the functional activity of the system is maintained at its normal. Tone may either be myogenic (muscular) in origin, or it may be neurogenic (nervous).

Tonics, therefore, are agents both chemical (drugs), and physical (heat, cold &c.), which acting either on the muscular, nervous, or neuro-muscular apparatus of our body bring it to its proper level when its activity has fallen below par.

**TOOTH.** "Tooth and nail." Desperate; whole-hearted.

**TOP.** "To sleep like a top." To sleep soundly. This phrase is taken from the French phrase meaning to sleep like a *taupe*, a dormouse. "Top-dress." In journalism *top-dressing* means an introduction to a report by a man of higher literary attainments than an ordinary reporter. This is printed in large type, followed by the report in details. Originally it is an agricultural term, meaning the process of applying manure on the top of earth, and hence, applied to the introduction on the top of a report. In common parlance it means doing the hair by dressing the top of the head.

**TOPAZ.** The origin of this name for a gem is given by Pliny from an island called Topazos in the Red Sea, the position being a conjecture. The word itself in Greek means to conjecture, and the conjectural position of the Island is in keeping with the Greek derivation.

**TOPER.** Drunkard.

**TOPSY-TURVY.** Formerly it was topsy-tervy, in the same way as upside down. Tervy, according to Skeat, comes from the Middle English *terven*, to roll, roll back (hence overthrow). It means the bottom upwards, hence upset, or in confusion. The adverb is topsy-turvy, the verb is topsy-turvyng and the substantives are topsy-turvisism, topsy-turvydom etc. Grove ingeniously suggests that the "etymology" is "top-side-turf-ways"—turf being always laid the wrong side upwards.

**TOTTY-HEADED.** It literally means little-headed, and slow to understand. The word "tot" in English is generic for anything small or little, and is especially used as a term of endearment, e.g. "a wee tot" meaning a little child.

**TOUCH.** The verb "to touch" is slangily used for "to borrow." Instead of saying "I borrowed £5 from him," persons who are not careful of their diction say "I touched him for £5." "To touch at." When a steamer arrives at a port and goes off without tarrying, it is said to touch at it. "To touch off." To touch off a portrait is to give it finishing touches. "To touch upon." To touch upon a subject is to deal with it slightly. "To touch up." To touch up a picture is to improve it by giving slight touches to it. "Touch of the tar brush." White persons who show signs of coloured blood in their veins are said to have a touch of the tar brush, the tar being black. "As near as a toucher." As near as may

be, without actually touching. It is a coaching term. The old jarvies used to drive against things so closely as almost to touch them without an injury, and this they call a "toucher," or "touch-an-go." Figuratively, this phrase is applied to anything that is within an ace of ruin.

**TOUCHY.** This is a corrupted form of tetchy. The word originally meant "infected or tainted"; from old French *teche* meaning a spot. It is now used in the sense of sensitive to touch.

**TOUR.** It really means a systematic excursion through some country, during which one may visit places of amusement and objects of interest, returning by a different route from that by which one sets out. It is in this sense that this word is used in England.

**TOUT.** In sporting phraseology it means an agent who is on the look-out for any information regarding the horses' condition, hotels, railways etc. As a verb it means to look out sharp, and this sense is retained in the phrases "to keep tout," "a strong tout." As a substantive, it means one who is employed by another to look out for customers for the employer, and in this sense it is the same as the old Cant word *tout*, to look out or watch.

**TOWARD, TOWARDS.** "The Anglo-Saxon *toeward* is usually an adjective with the sense future, about to come: *towearde* was a prep. usually put after its case"—Skeat—*Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. Now these words are used interchangeably with this difference that "towards" is more usual in prose and colloquialism, and it means (a) "in the direction of," as, "my bedroom window looks towards the garden," (b) "as regards," as, "he is unfavourably disposed towards me," (c) "for, for the purpose of," as, "He gave so much towards charity," and (d) "near," as, "We are going towards the end of our journey." In all these cases, this word is preposition. Formerly "toward" was also used as an adverb, as, "feast is toward" (coming).

**TOWN, CITY.** The word "town" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *tun* enclosure. In old times the enclosed area of ground which surrounded the dwelling of the lord of the manor was called a town. Later it came to be applied to a collection of such dwellings, and then, to a place which was largely populated. City comes from the Latin *civis*, a citizen, and the word in itself suggests to us all the glory of Rome. It can safely be said that the greater word city was introduced into the English language soon after the advent of William the Conqueror, for it should not be forgotten that Rome had in those days an immense influence over France who in her turn made her influence felt by England. The

old Saxons were agricultural people, and were content with the smaller "town."

**TRADE, COMMERCE.** These two words are used indiscriminately. The word "trade" comes from the Latin, *tracto*; I trade, and is applied to any sort of business which is mutual and which is carried on for the purpose of gain. If A has read a book and lends it to B who has not read it, and if B has read the book and lends it to A who has not read it, such an exchange can be called "trade" in the etymological sense of the word. A trade may be either for a good purpose or an evil purpose. The word "commerce" comes from the Latin *com*, and *merces*, meaning merchandise and is literally an exchange of merchandise, and as such it is a mode of trade. Trade may be wholesale, or retail, and hence a shop-keeper is a tradesman. But commerce, always being on a large scale, is only wholesale.

**TRADESMAN.** (Slang.) A thief. "A regular tradesman" means an expert thief.

**TRADITION.** Although this word is almost universally applied to oral communications, it is sometimes used to signify written memorials.

**TRAGEDY.** It comes from the Greek word, the literal meaning of which is "the song of the goat." Some think that the custom of the actors being dressed in goat-skins to resemble satyrs gave rise to this name, while others suppose that a goat was the prize for which the actors competed.

**TRAMWAY.** In 1800 Mr. Benjamin Outram made some improvements in connection with railways and this gave birth to the silly suggestion that "Tram-road" was an abbreviation of "Outram road." It is, however, not so, the original meaning of the word tram was a beam or balk of timber.

**TRANSPIRE, HAPPEN.** Literally transpire means to breathe through. The use of this word in the sense of "happen" is condemned by the best writers. But to use it in the sense of "to leak out" or "to come to be known" is quite correct. Mill in his book *Logic* says: "The word transpire formerly conveyed very expressively its correct meaning, viz., to become known through unnoticed channels—to exhale, as it were, into publicity through invisible pores like a vapour or gas disengaging itself. But of late, a practice has commenced of employing the word—as a mere synonym to 'to happen.' This vile specimen of bad English is already seen in the dispatches of noblemen and viceroys."

**TRAVESTY.** It literally means to change one's clothes, coming as it does from *vestis*, meaning a garment, clothing. Hence it signifies a ridiculous treatment or setting of a subject which has been originally handled in a serious and lofty manner. "Referring to the recent Suffragist trial, Mrs.

Chapman described Mr. Justice Phillimore's judgment as a travesty of justice."—*Daily Telegraph*.

**TREASURE-TROVE.** Treasure 'discovered hidden in the ground or elsewhere, the owner of which cannot be traced, and which legally belongs to the Crown. It is "where any gold or silver in coin, plate or bullion is found concealed in a house, or in the earth, or other private place, the owner thereof being unknown, in which case the treasure belongs to the King or his Grantee, having the franchise of treasure trove." It should be noted that nothing can be treasure-trove except gold and silver.

**TRIALS.** Trial literally is that which tries one either mentally, morally or physically. Hence we use "trials" for our earthly afflictions or earthly sufferings.

**TRIANGLE.** "The eternal triangle." Problem arising from one man's love for two women and *vice versa*, first treated of by Ibsen in his plays.

**TRIBUNE.** In France the pulpit from which the members of legislature deliver their speeches is called "Tribune."

**TRIFLE.** Many authorities think that trifle is another form of trivial.

**TRIP.** "To catch a man tripping." To find him out in the act of committing an error or an offence, as, the police is trying its level best to catch him tripping, but he never tumbles into that trap. "To trip up." To cause to fall, as, He was tripped up.

**TRIVIAL.** This word is derived from the Latin *trivialis*, *trivium*, a place where three roads or ways meet. Trench is of opinion that this word is borrowed from the life. Trivial remarks mean unimportant remarks, because they are so commonplace that they can be picked up anywhere.

**TROUNC.** "To trounce" means to punish or to beat severely; to castigate. This word is used both literally and figuratively. "Mr. Churchill is the very last man to put up with such knavish tricks, and he seems to enjoy himself thoroughly as he trounces the tricksters."—*Reynolds' Newspaper*.

**TROUSERS, TROWSERS.** The second *r* is a modern addition, the earlier words being trousers or trowses, meaning breeches. Originally this word was applied in English to Irish garracents.

**TRUE.** "True as touch." The reference in this phrase is to gold tested by the touch-stone.

**TRUMP.** As applied in a game of cards it is a corruption of "triumph." "He is a regular trump." He is a jolly good fellow. "Trumps may yet turn up." Fortune may yet favour

me. "To hold trumps." To be lucky, or to be sure of victory. Trumps are the winning cards at Whist. "To play one's trump-card." To use one's best chance of success, as, he failed many a time, but at last the moment came when he played his trump card. "To trump up." To concoct, as, in political circles it is not uncommon to trump up charges against one another.

**TRUSTWORTHY, TRUSTY, RELIABLE.** Trusty means careful and signifies one who is to be trusted, and it is applied to those in whom particular trust is placed, as in a trustee. It is applied both to persons and things. Dryden says "The trusty weapon sits on every side." A trustworthy person is one who is worthy of the trust or confidence of another and is restricted to persons only. The word trust is connected with true, and a true man is one whom everyone can trust. The word "rely, compounded of *re* and *ly*, or *lie*, signifies likewise to rest one's weight by lying or hanging back from the object held." Reliable is a species of dependence. Objection has been taken to the adjective "reliable" on the ground of its formation being improper, and those who have raised it suggest that the word ought to be "reliable," because we do not rely a person, but rely on him. But this objection seems quite absurd, because many other words are formed on the same principle as "reliable." For instance, "laughable," "conversible," "changeable."

**TRY, ATTEMPT.** Originally to try is to separate by rubbing; to attempt implies effort. "To try one's luck at the table" (colloquial). To gamble.

**TUBERCULOSIS.** It comes from the Latin *tuber* meaning a bump, swelling, and tuberculosis is a disease characterised by the appearance of these tiny little swellings in different organs of the human body. Tuberculosis should not be confused with phthisis. Phthisis comes from a Greek word meaning to waste, and is a general term for various conditions which cause the general wasting of the body, for instance, persons suffering from the wasting of the eye-ball are said to be suffering from orbital phthisis. Tuberculosis is that particular form of phthisis in which the chief lesion lies in the lungs, and hence it is called pulmonary phthisis. This disease is characterised by constant cough often associated with blood-stained expectoration, slow fever, night sweat, and increasing emaciation ending ultimately in the utter exhaustion of the body. The disease is as old as the world itself. Hippocrates (460—377 B.C.), the well-known Greek physician, refers to its ravages in his works. Many a lively discussion has taken place as to the nature of this dire disease. Galen had his suspicions about its infectious nature, and Morgagni in the Middle

Ages had scarcely any other explanation to offer. Later on, however, the theory of "tuberculous diathesis," that is, natural tendency to contract the disease, arose. In 1865 Villemin enunciated the theory of the germ origin of the disease, but it was not until the classical researches in 1882 of Robert Koch, the famous German bacteriologist, that the bacterial origin of the disease was definitely established.

**TUESDAY.** (Anglo-Saxon *trivesdaeg*) from *Tiw*, the God of War.

**TUMBLE.** "To tumble" is slangily used for to understand. Instead of saying "Do you understand it?" those given to slang say: "Do you tumble to it?"

**TURKEY.** "To talk Turkey." (American.) To converse on profitable business. This phrase is derived from a well-known story. A white man and a Red Indian went hunting together, and it was mutually agreed that the game was to be divided piece by piece. Two wild turkeys and three crows turned out to be the result of the sport. In order to appropriate the turkeys, the white man undertook the counting out, and he began by giving the Red Indian a crow, and a turkey to himself. He proceeded to divide the spoils by allotting another crow to the Red Indian, and bestowing the second turkey upon himself, whereupon the Red Indian demurred, remarking "You talk all turkey for you, and only talk crow for myself."

**TURMOIL.** This is probably a corrupt form of turn and moil.

**TURN.** "Turn up." This is a slipshod expression for "putting in an appearance," and it has been severely condemned by those who have a great regard for the technique of the language. "Turn-out." In London society this word is a favourite one, and is used in the sense of a "get-up." A carriage smartly got up with all its accompaniments is called a smart "turn-out." People, especially ladies, who dress well and look smart are said to be well "turned out."

**TURNCOAT.** This political term of derision is said to have arisen as follows:—The Duke of Savoy took, indifferently, sometimes part with France, and sometimes with Spain; for that purpose he had a corps attired in coats which were white on one side and scarlet on the other; so that when he meant to declare for France he wore the white outside, and when for Spain, the red.—Edward Shelton, *The Historical Finger-post*.

**TURRET.** It is really "towerette" meaning a small tower.

**TUSSLE.** Struggle, scuffle. Johnson and Webster call it a vulgar word. It is used both as noun and verb. We tussle with a person for a thing.

**TWELVER.** Slangily used for a shilling



**TWENTY-THREE.** A recent slang expression used in "the sense of "fade-away" in sporting and theatrical circles.

**TWIG.** As a verb it means to understand; to perceive. One daily hears in London the expression "do you twig," meaning "do you understand." It is derived from the Gaelic *tuig* meaning to understand, or to discern. This word in the said sense is generally supposed to be slang, but really it is not slang.

**TWILIGHT.** This word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *twēon* meaning between, and *leoht* meaning light.

**TWIN.** It literally means two at a time, and is applied to each of a closely-related pair, especially children born at a birth.

**TWO.** "To want twopence in the shilling." To be crazy. The head is sarcastically called a man's "twopenny." In the game of leap frog, the boy stooping down is told to "tuck in his twopenny." "Twopenny-halfpenny." Of no consequence or importance, that is, insignificant, said of persons and things, as, he is a twopenny-halfpenny fellow, and, it is a twopenny-halfpenny paper. "Two strings to one's bow." Keeping in possession two things with a view to hold by the better. When a girl encourages two lovers with the intention of accepting the better in the end, she is said to have two strings to her bow.

**TWO, TWAIN.** The original Anglo-Saxon words show that the difference between these two words is that of gender only, *twain* being masculine and *two* feminine.

## U.

**U.K.** An abbreviation of United Kingdom.

**U.S.A.** An abbreviation of United States of America.

**UBIQUITY.** This is derived from the Latin *ubique*, meaning everywhere. Ubiquity is one of the Regal prerogatives of the King, and when we say that the King is ubiquitous we mean that in the eye of the law he is present in all his Courts. "Ubiquists" were a sect of Lutherans who maintained that Christ was ubiquitous on account of His being everywhere and in every place. On this point, however, their opinions differed, some holding that Christ was everywhere during His mortal life, and others maintaining that the ubiquity of His body dated from the time of His ascension.

**UGLY.** Some authorities think that the word comes from the Anglo-Saxon *ouph-lic*, like a goblin, and a goblin is ungainly in appearance. Others think that the Welsh word *hagr*, meaning like a hag, gives us the English word ugly. Hence ugly means hag-like. In the United States the word still

retains its meaning of evil temper, as in the sentence "I'll not answer her back, when she is 'ugly' to me." "Ugly as sin" is a Biblical expression. "An ugly duckling." The phrase is taken from a fable in which the ugly duckling proved to be a swan, hence, figuratively it means something which is at first discarded and despised for its ugliness, but which in the end proves itself worthy of admiration.

**UTERINE BROTHER OR SISTER.** A brother or sister born of the same mother but by a different father, in other words, a step-brother or a step-sister.

**ULTIMA THULE.** This Latin expression means "the extreme end." The most northerly part of Europe with which the Romans were acquainted was called by them by that name.

**ULTIMATUM.** (Latin.) In diplomacy, the final proposals, conditions, or terms which, if not accepted, put an end to all negotiations, and lead to a declaration of war.

**ULTRA.** A Latin prefix in modern politics used to denote the straining party sentiments beyond their limits. For instance, ultra-liberal means something more than liberal and hence approaching a Radical.

**ULTRAMARINE.** As an adjective it is used in the sense of "beyond the sea" which is its literal meaning, or in other words, the "beyond sea" in English language has been latinised into Ultramarine. As a noun it indicates the beautiful blue pigment resembling the pure blue of the ocean.

**ULTRAMONTANE.** It comes from the Latin *ultra* meaning beyond, and *montes* meaning the mountains. It is a term applied by the French to the Italians who live on the other side of the Alps. The name is also given in France to those who defend the ecclesiastical authority of the Pope.

**ULTRA VIRES.** This Latin term is used in Law to signify "beyond the powers" where a company goes beyond the powers given to it by law, the act is said to be *ultra vires*. For instance, if a company be established for making railways and the directors undertake the making of roads, the making of roads would be *ultra vires*, and the shareholders may sue the directors.

**UMBRAGE.** "To take umbrage" (less commonly, to give umbrage). It means "to be offended, to be jealous of another as standing in one's light, the feeling of being overshadowed. And the derivation of the word implies this—it is the Latin *umbra*, shade, shadow." But some authorities think that it is derived from the French *ombrage* meaning shade. The figure is rather striking, as one who originally took umbrage was "thrown into the shade" by another.

**UMPIRE.** Umpire was originally *nomper* or *numpire*, from the old French *nompair*, not paired, odd, not equal. Hence

the true meaning of the word is an odd or third person who decides a dispute.

**UN-LICKED.** An un-licked cub is an unmannerly youth. The tradition or notion that a bear gives birth to a cub without shape or symmetry which she afterwards licks into shape, gave rise to this expression. "Unbleached American." A term for a negro. But it is now voted low.

**UNCLE.** "My uncle's." It means the pawnbroker's. "Gone to my uncle's" means gone to the pawnbroker. *Uncle's* is a pun on the Latin word *uncus*, a hook. Pawnbrokers employed the hook to lift articles pawned before spouts were adopted. "Gone to the *uncus*" is exactly tantamount to the more modern phrase "Up the spout." The pronoun was inserted to carry out the pun.—Dr. Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. "Uncle Sam." This name was given to the United States of America during the War of Independence. It is a jocular instance of the initials U.S. "To talk to a person like a Dutch uncle." To talk to him with kindly severity.

**UNCOUTH.** Formerly this word meant unknown, coming as it does from the Anglo-Saxon *uncudh*, meaning unknown, and the proverb "Uncouth, unkist," signifies that what is unknown is uncouth. It is now used in the sense of ungainly.

**UNCTION.** "To lay a flattering unction to the soul." This phrase occurs in *Hamlet* and it signifies the soothing of one's self with a pleasing fancy.

**UNDER.** "Under the screw." To be in prison. "Under the sun." This expression means "in the world," as, there is no new thing under the sun. Hood in one of his famous poems makes use of this expression which suggests a "survey of the world." The lines are :—

"Sisterly, brotherly,  
Fatherly, motherly  
Home she had none.  
Alas! for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
Under the sun."

"Under the rose." In strict confidence. Cupid bribed Hippocrates, the Greek God of Silence, with a rose not to reveal the indiscreet love affairs of Venus, hence the flower became the emblem of silence.

**UNDERGRADUATES** (Turf). Horses that are being trained for steeplechase.

**UNDERGROUNDER.** (Cricket.) A ball bowled all along the ground, without a proper pitch.

**UNDERSTANDINGS.** Shoes, feet, in opposition to tops.

**UNDERSTUDY.** (Theatrical.) An actor, or actress who studies a theatrical part in order to play it at short notice in the absence of the principal performer. This is done in order that the run of the piece may not be suspended.

**UNDERTAKER.** Originally it simply meant "one who undertakes" to do a particular job, as a contractor, and a "contractor for funerals" was a "funeral undertaker." Afterwards the adjective was dispensed with, and the word came to be applied in this restrictive sense. Among instances of similar kinds are "fall" for "fall of the autumn," "paper" for "newspaper," etc.

**UNDERWRITE.** This term signifies an insurance, whether it be against a maritime risk or some other risk or contingency made the subject of a transaction at Lloyd's, or against the risk of the public failing to respond to an issue of the shares or debentures of a company. The term is derived from the fact that an insurance contract of this class is usually "underwritten," or subscribed at its foot, by the persons who undertake the risk.—W. S. M. Knight—*The Business Encyclopædia and Legal Adviser*, Vol. 5.

**UNEXPRESSIVE.** Shakespeare uses this word for "inexpressible" in "the unexpressive she" meaning the ineffable lady, just as he uses "uncomprehensive" for "incomprehensible."

**UNION.** As late as Jeremy Taylor the word "union" was used by some of the best writers for a pearl of rare and transcendent beauty. The word union, as applied to a pearl, referred to its chief excellence being united. Shakespeare also uses it in that sense in *Hamlet*. "Union Jack." Union refers to the three kingdoms united into one great political power. Originally the national flag of England was the banner of St. George—white with a red cross, and it was called "the Jack." In the reign of James I. who ruled over both kingdoms, the banner of St. Andrew, blue with a white diagonal cross, was added, and in 1801 the banner of St. Patrick—white with a diagonal red cross, was added, thus forming the "union." The word "Jack" may be a corruption of the French "Jacque," a jacket, or it may be an abbreviation of Jacobus, as an alteration in the banner of St. George occurred in the reign of James I.

**UNIQUE.** The word signifies "being the only one of its kind," and, hence, the words "very," "most," &c. all of which imply degrees should not precede the word unique. We may say "quite unique," meaning without parallel, but we cannot say "very unique."

**UNITARIANS.** This comprehensive term is applied to all those who believe the Deity to subsist in one person only.

**UNIVERSITY.** First applied to Collegiate societies of learning in the twelfth century, as the word is derived from the Latin *universitas* meaning the whole of anything. Such is not necessarily the case now, as Dublin has only one college which goes by the name of University.

**UNPARLIAMENTARY.** Obscene or abusive, unfit for ordinary conversation, as, his language is always unparliamentary.

**UNSALTED.** Inexperienced; fresh, green.

**UNUTTERABLES.** Trowers. Similar expressions are "unmentionables," "unwhisperables," "inexpressibles," and "ineffables."

**UNWASHED.** Burke called the mob "the great unwashed," but he was not the first to do so. Gay used it before Burke did in the same sense.

**UNWELL.** This word should not be used in the sense of ill. The proper expression is "I am not well." Unwell is only used of women in a restricted sense.

**UP.** "An up train." A train going towards the principal terminus of the railway is an up train, and one leaving it is a down train. "Ups and downs of life." The vicissitudes of life, ups referring to prosperity, and downs to adversity. "All up." In a hopeless condition of affairs. It is all up with him. "Up and about." No longer in bed. "I am up and about at six in the morning." "Up the spout." In pawn. "He is up a tree." (American.) He is in temporary difficulties, that is, cornered. A similar Scotch phrase is "up a close." "He is up to (or in) the law, mathematics," &c. He is conversant with the law, mathematics, &c. "What is up?" What is the matter; what is going on; what is the news? "He is up to snuff (scent, or the ropes)." He is wide awake, that is, acquainted with the last new move. "He is up to the gossip (or he is up to his gossip)." He is quite prepared for one who is trying to take him in. "He is up to slum." He is proficient in roguery. "He is up in the stirrups." He has plenty of money. "To be up to a thing or two." To be knowing or understanding. "Up and down." It is old English for "in every respect." "Up in his hat." It is an Irish expression meaning drunk. It is equivalent to English slang "elevated." "Up to the knocker." One usually hears this term in the phrase "dressed up to the knocker" meaning very elegantly dressed. "Up to the ropes." Sagacious, knowing. "Up to dick." This phrase has many meanings. "He is up to dick" means (a) he is clever, (b) he is rich or generous, (c) he is quick, and (d) he is jolly. The word is derived from the Gipsy *dick* or *dikk* which means to see, to perceive. "Living up to his blue china." Living up to or beyond his income. The phrase came into the English language at a time when blue china was very

precious and valuable. "Up to the hub." This phrase means "as far as possible," "to the utmost," or "to the extreme point." Hub is an old English word for the nave of a wheel, and the reference is to a vehicle sunk in the mud right up to the hub, that is, as far as it can go.

**UPAS TREE.** There was a traditional belief that the tree emitted a poisonous vapour which killed everything it touched. Figuratively it means anything that is baneful or evil in influence.

**UPBRAID.** To reprove. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *up* meaning upon, and *bregden*, meaning to lay hold of, to seize. The original sense is that of laying hold of and hence to attack, accuse, &c.

**UPHOLDER, UPHOLSTERER.** An upholder is an undertaker of funerals. An upholsterer is one who furnishes and fits up houses for residence.—Smart. The literal meaning of upholsterer is one who holds up goods for sale. It is another form of upholder, which was formerly used in the same sense in which we now use this word, upholsterer.

**UPON, ABOVE.** A hat is upon one's head, and sky is above one's head. "Upon my Sam." Upon my soul. It is very common in the mouths of women.

**UPPER.** "Upper Benjamin." A top-coat. "Upper shell" means a coat. "Upper storey." The head. "Rats in the upper storey." Crazy. "His upper storey is unfurnished." He is a stupid man; he is devoid of common sense. A similar expression is "upper storey to let." A similar expression which is more often used nowadays in England is "Apartments to let," referring to one who has a somewhat empty head.

**UPPISH.** (Yorkshire.) Arrogant, self-assertive, pert.

**UPROAR.** This is not compounded of up and roar, as the meaning would imply, but is the German *auf*—*ruthren* meaning to stir up.

**UPSET.** "Upset his applecart." One usually hears this expression in this form: "Mind, or you will upset your applecart, and spill the peaches," meaning take care, or you will come to grief. "An upset price." The price at which goods at an auction are first offered by the auctioneer. "Reserved bid" signifies the same.

**URBANE.** It comes from *urbs* meaning a city. Urbane is applied to those who live in a town or a city in contrast to those who live in country districts. The former are more polished and elegant in their manners than the latter, and hence "urbane manners" are polite manners.

**USE.** "Used up." Fatigued, broken-hearted. It is also used in the sense of bankrupt.

**USHER.** This word is supposed to be derived from the French *huis* meaning a door, and this sense is retained in the verb

"to usher." We usher a person into a presence. An usher is an officer of the court whose duty is to keep the door and call out loudly the names of witnesses who have been called by the court, and to preserve order, peace and silence generally.

**UTILITARIAN.** A word which is supposed to have been first used by John Stuart Mill. But he himself in his autobiography says "I did not invent the word, but found it in one of Galt's novels, *The Annals of the Parish*. Jeremy Bentham employed the word 'utility' to signify the doctrine that utility is the end and purpose of moral virtue, or in his own words "the greatest happiness for the greatest number." According to this doctrine, this should be the motto of every government.

**UTILITIES.** (Theatrical.) Minor parts for beginners. .

**UTOPIA.** An imaginary place of ideal perfection, so called from the book of that name by Sir Thomas Moore in 1516. Any views expressed in advance of public opinion are oftentimes denounced as Utopian (impracticable).

**UTTER.** Although the verb "to utter" is used to denote the act of speaking, it has a wider meaning of putting forth, either by words or otherwise. This sense is retained in the phrase "to utter bad money" which means to put bad money into circulation. It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *utian*, meaning to put forth, to eject. "An utter or outer Barrister." A barrister licensed to practise. "An inner barrister" means a law student. Utter and outer are doublets, both being derived from the Anglo-Saxon *ut*, meaning out, and the Anglo-Saxon comparative of *ut* is *uttor*.

## V.

**VACILLATE, WAVER.** Vacillate is properly a Latin word, though it is connected with the English word "wag." Waver comes from wave, and its origin in that word is obvious. "To wave" really is to fluctuate, and by a curious coincidence, the word fluctuate comes from the Latin *fluctus*, meaning a wave.

**VACUUM.** It literally means an empty space, and we use it in that sense. "A vacation usually creates a vacuum in one's pocket."—*London Mail*, 1913.

**VADE-MECUM (A).** This Latin phrase literally means "go with me." A book of reference that can be carried about.

**VAE VICTIS (Latin).** It means "woe to the vanquished."

**VAGABOND.** In an old English statute, vagabonds are defined as "such as wake on the night and sleep on the day, and haunt customable taverns and ale-houses, and rout about, and no man wot whence they came nor whither they go."

**VAGARY.** Originally this was used as a verb, as "to wander, vagary." But now it is a noun.

**VAGRANT.** The Latin derivation is *Vageri*, meaning to wander, but this sense is lost when this term is used in law which divides vagrant into three grades: (1) Beggars and idle persons who are able to maintain themselves and their families, but neglect to do so, (2) persons who are found guilty as rogues and vagabonds, and (3) the incorrigible vagrants who have committed the offence more than once.

**VAGUE.** Unsettled, as "I have some vague idea of going back to India next month," or "his answer was very vague." It comes from the French *vaguer*, to wander (see vagary).

**VAIN.** The very derivation of this word is suggestive of the empty-headedness of a vain person, coming as it does from the Latin *vacuus*.

**VALENTINE'S DAY.** "Valentines have nothing on earth to do with the old third century monk and martyr whose commemoration is somehow linked up with the festival of lovers. Formerly the first Sunday in Lent was the day fixed for sending love's greetings and was known as Valentine's day, Valentine simply meaning gallant, or lover. With the advent of democratic manners the pretty old custom has fallen into disuse; we make love now at all times of the year, thank God, and send love's greetings at all hours if one's balance at the bank runs to it."—*Modern Society*, 1914.

**VALET.** This is the same as varlet, which originally was vaslet, which is an abbreviation of vessalet, being a diminutive of Vassal, meaning subject. A personal attendant or bed-room servant. "No-one is a hero to his valet."

**VALUABLE.** Anything that has monetary value or worth of character is valuable, and it is sometimes misused for valued. We speak of a "valued friend" and a "valuable property."

**VAMPIRE.** A nocturnal demon, supposed to suck out the blood of his victims. But the vampire-bat is a real animal, and Darwin has related a story about it in one of his books.

**VAN.** The word van in the sense of a light cart is not the same as the "van" of an army, but is merely the last syllable of the word "caravan," as "bus" is that of "omnibus." A caravan was originally a team of travellers; thence it came to signify a train of strollers, showmen, and others, and as sometimes these parties, which consisted of only a few people, could be carried in a waggon or a cart, the word caravan came to designate such a cart or waggon.

**VANITY.** It literally means emptiness, and hence, a person of vanity is generally one who is empty-headed.



**VANTAGE.** Short for "advantage" and is used chiefly in tennis and also in the two phrases of "vantage ground" and "coign of vantage." To my knowledge this abbreviation has never been used in connection with anything else.

**VAPID.** This is allied to vapour, and, hence wine that has emitted its vapour becomes flat and insipid, i.e., vapid.

**VATICAN.** The Palace and official residence of the Pope of Rome, built on the hills of Rome. Is said to be the most magnificent in the world. Figuratively it means ~~the~~ Papal Government.

**VAUDEVILLE.** A vaudeville is a slight dramatic sketch with songs and dances. It also means a variety entertainment. In London there is a Vaudeville Theatre, "so-termed of Vaudevire, a Norman town, wherein Olivier Bassel (or Basselin) the first inventor of country ballads, lived." Basselin was a Norman poet, whose songs were named after his native valley, the Val de Vire.

**VAUNT.** This word is generally derived from the French *vanter*, and this from the Latin *vanitare*, meaning to talk emptily. This looks very simple and clear, but Ernest Weekley in his *The Romance of Words* does not think the said origin probable, but says:—"At present we find *venter* as early as *vatner*, and this would represent Latin *venditare* (frequentative of *vendere*, to sell) to push one's goods, 'to do anything before men to set forth himself and have a prayse; to vaunt, to crake; to brag' (Cooper)."

**VEGETATE.** It comes from the Latin *vegetatus*, which is the past participle of *vegetare*, meaning to enliven or to quicken, and yet this word is used in a sense entirely the reverse. A person living away in a secluded spot may be said to be vegetating, meaning that he finds the life dull without anything to enliven or animate him.

**VEHEMENT.** When we speak of a person of a vehement spirit we merely mean that he is a person of a fierce spirit, without necessarily making any allusion to the state of his mind, although to be vehement literally means to be carried out of one's mind. It comes from the Latin *vehere*, meaning to carry away, and *mens*, meaning the mind. Indirectly the word retains its original signification, because no one in his proper senses and in his calm and collected moments would behave in an irrational manner.

**VEIL.** "To take the veil." To become a nun. "Beyond the veil." In the other world. "To draw a veil over." To conceal.

**VENAL, VENIAL.** Venal means mercenary, and hence signifies one who sells himself to another from sordid motives; a venial offence is one that is slight, and therefore, pardonable.

**VENI, VIDI, VICI.** The immortal words used by Julius Cæsar in announcing his victory over Pharnaces at Zela in Asia Minor, meaning "I came, I saw, I conquered."

**VENISON.** The modern use of the word to signify the flesh of deer is perfectly unjustifiable and erroneous. It really means the flesh of any animal that has been hunted.

**VENTILATE.** The original meaning of the word was to examine, to sift, or to discuss, and this meaning is revived. Johnson says that it was used in his time but Worcester's Dictionary, published in 1860, gives it as an obsolete word.

**VENTRE A TERRE.** (French.) It literally means "with the belly on the earth," and figuratively signifies "at the greatest speed."

**VENTRILLOQUISM.** The belief that ventriloquial sounds are produced from the belly is an erroneous one, although the derivation of the word is the Latin *venter*, meaning the belly, and *loqui*, to speak. As a matter of fact ventriloquial sounds are produced in the same manner as any ordinary speech with this difference that a ventriloquist moves his lips as little as possible, so as to illude the audience into the belief that he is not speaking. The act of ventriloquism was known to the Greeks and to the Romans.

**VENUE.** This French word in law means the place of trial.

**VENUS.** Goddess of beauty.

**VERACITY, TRUTH.** Truth relates to persons and facts; veracity only to persons and to the statements which they make.

**VERANDAH.** The English language owes this word to India, the Sanskrit word being *varanda*, meaning a portico. The Portuguese call a balcony or a terrace *varanda*.

**VERBUM SAP.** (Latin.) This is a contraction of the Latin phrase *Verbum sat sapienti*, meaning "a word is enough to the wise."

**VERDICT.** This comes from the Latin *vere dictum*, meaning a true saying, and the very derivation of the word brings to our mind the responsibility that rests with the jury in finding a true saying (a verdict).

**VERGER.** This comes from the Latin *virga*, a twig, a rod, and the word literally means one who bears a rod of office. A vergier is an officer who bears the staff of office before a bishop. It is also applied to the official who takes charge of the interior of a church.

**VERMICELLI.** This Italian word literally means "little worms," and this delicious viand is so called because of the worm-like appearance of the slender threads.

**VERNACULAR.** It means native, coming as it does from the Latin *verna*, which literally means "a slave born in his

owner's house." From *verna* we have the Latin word *vernaculus*, meaning native, and from this the English language borrowed the word vernacular.

**VERSE.** It comes from the Latin *versus*, meaning a turning, a course, line of poetry.

**VERULAM BUILDINGS.** (London.) So named in honour of Lord Bacon, who was Baron Verulam. Tennyson describes Francis Bacon as "large-browed Verulam, the first of those who know."

**VERVE.** Great spirit, energy, enthusiasm. "Every day without a break, he wrote his leaderette, every day made game of the Government, accused every statesman of bribery, theft, immorality and murder, but did it all with delicious verve—at 82."—*Daily Telegraph*.

**VERY.** This is used both as an adjective and as an adverb. When there is anything unusually remarkable, or startling described, this adjective can be appropriately used, as "I saw him in perfect health that evening, and that very night he was found dead in bed." The adverb *very* does not admit of the superlative degree, but as it only expresses a high degree, the definite article "the" is as a rule out of place, as in the sentence "In the development of one's character, self-reliance and self-respect are the very essential things." But the definite article "the" is used when "very" as an adverb qualifies the adjective which follows it, as "the very early development of a child's mind."

**VESSELS.** "Vessels under weigh." This should really be "Vessels under way," because way, nautically speaking, signifies the progress of the ship through the water, whereas to weigh means to lift, as, for instance, "to weigh anchor," i.e. to lift the anchor.

**VEST, WAISTCOAT.** What Englishmen call a waistcoat, Americans call a vest, whilst the under-garment which Englishmen call a vest, or a flannel vest, is known in America as a flannel waist-coat.

**VESTA.** The wax match is so called after the Roman goddess Vesta, whose sacred fire was kept continually burning. Vesta herself was the goddess of fire.

**VESTA.** Daughter of Saturn and Cybele, the virgin goddess of fire, of the hearth, and of the home.

**VESTALS.** In Roman mythology the six virgins who took a vow of perpetual chastity and were employed to watch the sacred fire on the altar of the goddess Vesta were called Vestals.

**VETO.** This was the solemn word used by the Tribunes of the Roman people when "they inhibited" any decree of the Senate, or law proposed to the people, or any act of other magistrates, and it means "I forbid."

**VEX.** It comes from the Latin *verare*, meaning to shake or jolt in carrying. All of us who are vexed by a series of annoyances have a sort of feeling as if we were carrying about a jolting burden.

**VIA MEDIA.** (Latin.) A middle path.

**VIAL.** "Vials of wrath." Vengeance; indignation. The allusion is to the seven angels who poured out their vials of wrath upon the earth.

**VICE-PRESIDENT.** "Vice" in this word has nothing to do with the other "vice" meaning faults. In this case it comes from the Latin *vicis*, turn, and it means "in the place of." It should also be noted that it has no connection with "vice" signifying an instrument for holding things together.

**VICE VERSA.** (Latin.) Literally "the terms being exchanged"; and is used for placing two things each in the place of the other.

**VICINITY, NEIGHBOURHOOD.** Vicinity comes from the Latin *vicinia*, meaning a village, which signifies the place not exceeding the extent of village in distance. Neighbourhood comes from *nigh*, signifying the place which is nigh. "We live in the vicinity of a church" or "of the sea" (physically) or "in the neighbourhood of friends" (socially).

**VICTORIA.** This four-wheeled carriage is so-called, like so many other things which are named after the people who either invented them, or discovered them, or introduced them. "Victoria weather." Queen Victoria, as a rule was so lucky in having fine weather on days when she had to attend public functions, that a fine day came to be called Victoria weather.

**VICTORY.** "A Cadmean Victory." A victory which causes the victor as much loss as the enemy. "The allusion is to the armed men who sprang out of the teeth of the dragon sown by Cadmus. These men fell foul of one another, and only five of them escaped death."

**VIE.** "The verb to vie is shortened from *envie*—not the same word as the modern *envy*, but adopted from the French *envier*, which comes from the Latin *invitare*, to challenge; so that *vie* and *invite* are in ultimate etymology the same."  
—Henry Bradley, *The Making of English*.

**VIKING.** (Scandinavian.) The Vikings were the Scandinavians who harried the British Islands in the ninth century, and hence the word "Viking" came to be used for any pirate. The Vikings were pirates when robbery was an honourable profession.

**VILLA.** Originally this is a Latin designation for a "farm-house" with its accompaniments, and from its association with the Roman landholding, the word could be applied to

a fine and splendid estate. In this original sense, the word is used by Evelyn in his *Diary*. In England, a suburban house is called a villa. The word has never domesticated itself in America in this sense, though it is extremely common in England and all over the Continent. The reason for its not making itself at home in America is that when the country was settled, the word was then looked upon as a foreign word, restricted to its original signification of the villas of the Italian nobility. A villa is always outside the city, and has for its accompaniment a garden.

**VILLAGE.** Literally it means belonging to a farmhouse. (See Villa.)

**VILLAIN.** It is derived from the Latin *villa* meaning a farmhouse, and originally a villain signified a farm-labourer, and was therefore a term which described a particular station in life. Soon, however, those who were imbued with courtesy which in the Middle Ages signified "the continent of what part a gentleman would see" used the word villain out of contempt applying it to a "low fellow" in general. From this we get the modern debased meaning of the word which can now be applied to any low and worthless fellow in any walk of life. Several other words which like the word villain properly mean "farm-hand" have become more or less debased.

**VIM.** Some people think that it is an American word, but there is no doubt that this word is very popular among English schoolboys, and means strength, activity, pluck.

**VINEGAR.** This word is in reality the English form of the French *vin-aigre*, meaning sour wine. Vinegar Bible. In 1717 an Oxford edition of the Bible was published, in which occurred a printer's error. The headline over Luke xxii. has the misprint "vinegar" for "vineyard" and hence that edition is called the Vinegar Bible.

**VIN ORDINAIRE.** (French.) Ordinary red wine, supplied free of charge at meals in French hotels.

**VINTNER.** From the Latin *vinum*, meaning wine, hence it means one who sells wine.

**VIOLENT.** "To die a violent death." If a person dies by violence, as by murder, &c., he is said to "die a violent death," as distinguished from "one who dies a natural death."

**VIOLET.** The remarkable thing about this word is that in many languages this flower is known by a similar name. The colour of the violet indicates love of truth, and the truth of love. Ophelia says "I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father died," meaning that although love is true, her love of truth prevents her from putting the flower into a blood-stained hand, violet being an emblem of innocence.

**VIRAGO.** This is a Latin word, retained in the English language in its original form, and it literally means "a manly woman"; *vir* means man. In old English it meant a woman of masculine strength, or spirit, and Amazon; but now it is applied to a scolding, turbulent woman. The same as termagant or shrew.

**VIRGIN.** "Virgin soil." What is fresh and uncultivated, hence, what is not used. "As contrasted with the legal profession, the medical profession in India can be called almost virgin soil."

**VIRGINIA.** This American State is so called in compliment to Queen Elizabeth who according to her vow, lived and died a virgin (unmarried).

**VIRILE.** It literally means manly, *vir* meaning man (see Virago). Virile is used of mind, character, literary style, &c. A virile style is one full of vigour.

**VIRTUE.** It comes from the Latin *vir*, meaning man, and it originally signified bravery or daring. Sir Walter Raleigh says: "The conquest of Palestine with singular virtue they performed."

**VIRTUOSO.** This is borrowed from the Italian in its original form into the English language, and means one who is skilled in the fine arts. It has no connection with virtue, which literally means manly excellence, the Latin word meaning a man.

**VIRULENT.** It literally means poison, hence anything that is dangerous, as poison is called virulent, as "a fever of a virulent type."

**VISIONARY, IMAGINATIVE, FANTASTIC.** Visionary is a stronger word than imaginative, and carries with it a slight connotation of blame, for a visionary person acts on his visions, believing them to be realities. Visionary and imaginative are generally applied to persons, whereas fantastic to things.

**VISIT.** This word, strictly speaking, should not be used in the sense of punishment. It would not be correct to say "The author visited the critic with much abuse for having severely criticised his book."

**VISITATION.** This is used in two senses, (a) divine dispensation of punishment or reward, and (b) official visit of inspection, especially a Bishop's examination of the churches of his diocese.

**VITUPERATION.** It literally means "to prepare (or find) a blemish," *vitū*, a vice or fault; *parare*, to prepare. "No other profession would tolerate the vituperation and villification poured upon the men of light and leading in the theatre."—*London Opinion*, 1913.

**VIVACIOUS.** Lively. Both lively and vivacious are good

English words; but lively is "popular" and vivacious is "learned." "She is a vivacious girl."

**VIVA VOCE.** Literally it means "by word of mouth." A *viva voce* examination is an oral examination, because answers are made by word of mouth.

**VIXEN.** This is the only word which has retained the Old English mode of forming the feminine gender by adding the suffix "en." The word itself is the feminine of *vix*, which is the name for fox in Southern England.

**VIZ.** This is a contraction of *videlicet*, which literally means "one may see." When books were written by hand, and as a rule in Latin, the abbreviation for the Latin "et" at the close of a word so closely resembled the letter "z," that the contraction "viz." took the place of *vizet* which was the abbreviated form of *videlicet*.

**VIZIER.** A Councillor of State, or the Diwan, as he is called in India. It comes from the Arabic *wazara*, meaning to bear a burden, and a Councillor of State is one who bears the burden of State affairs.

**VOGUE.** It comes from the French *voguer*, meaning to row, or to sail, or to be wafted. Hence, anything in vogue is that which goes with the tide.

**VOID, VOIDABLE.** A contract is said to be void when it is no contract at all in the eyes of the law; a voidable contract is that which one party may at his option treat as if it has never been binding on him.

**VOLLEY.** It comes from the French *volée*, meaning a flight, hence a flight of shot. In the military sense of the word, it means a shot, as "volley after volley." This term is also used in tennis for a sharp quick flight of shot, which the opponent as a rule finds difficult to return. In cricket also we have half-volleys, which shoot forth suddenly and keep low, and as a rule, they prove fatal to the batsman, unless he runs out to them and smothers them.

**VOLTE-FACE.** (French.) A complete change of conduct or policy. "Nothing in the last two years had happened to justify the Conference in executing a *volte-face*."—*Journal of Education*, 1887.

**VOLUBLE.** It comes from the Latin verb *volvo*, meaning to roll, and a voluble speaker is one from whose mouth words roll without any effort. At one time this simply meant fluent, but now it signifies, or at least insinuates, that the speech so-called is freer and faster than it should be.

**VOLUME.** It comes from the Latin *volumen*, meaning a roll, and a book came to be called a volume because the ancients rolled their books on rolls which were wound round with silk.

**VOLUNTARY.** This word is allied to *will*, and, hence, anything voluntary is of one's own will.

**VOMIT.** It properly means to eject from the stomach through the mouth, but is figuratively said of volcanoes, chimneys, &c., as "the chimney vomits smoke."

**VOTE, VOW.** These are doublets, and they both come from the Latin *votum*, from *vovere*, to vow. They are, however, now used in different senses; although when a person votes or aching, he indirectly implies that he vows to stand by it.

**VOTING, VOTIVE.** Voting paper is that which is used in votes by ballot in election of M.P. and others; votive offering is that which is offered or consecrated in fulfilment of a vow. The votive offerings to the gods by the Romans were in the shape of images. A sailor who had come home safe after surviving wreckage would offer a small wooden ship to the gods. "Vow of the swans." Edward II., just before his expedition into Scotland, took an oath to God and to two swans at a royal banquet that he would have vengeance on Robert Bruce and upon the Scots for their treachery. The swan was then a royal device, adopted in connection with war.

**VOX POPULI, VOX DEI.** The voice of the people is the voice of God. This maxim has been put forward by those who oppose the divine right of Kings. When Edward II. was dethroned by the people, and his son Edward III. enthroned, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Maphan, first used this phrase in a sermon which he preached.

**VOYAGE.** It comes from the Latin *via*, meaning way, and *ago*, meaning to pursue, and formerly it meant a journey either by land or by sea, in this sense French people still use the word. The wish *bon voyage* may be wished to a friend who may be going a few miles even by railway.

**VULGAR.** This word comes from the Latin *vulgaris*, meaning common. In its original sense the word implied nothing vulgar, and simply meant "general," "ordinary," or "vernacular." For instance, the common phrase "vulgar tongue" originally meant the language commonly spoken. "The vulgar tongue." The ordinary language of the common people. The word vulgar in this expression has nothing to do with vulgarity or rudeness.

**VULGARIAN.** A person, especially rich, but vulgar, is called a vulgarian.

**VULGATE.** A very ancient Latin version of the Bible, prepared by St. Jerome (A.D. 329-420). It is the only one acknowledged as authentic by the Church of Rome. The word "vulgate" is derived from the Latin *vulgatus*, meaning common, general, to make public.



**VULTURE.** It is derived from the Latin *vellere*, meaning to pluck, to tear, and the word signifies a plucker or a tearer. Plucking and tearing are characteristic of a vulture, which is a bird of prey.

## W.

**WAGES.** "When the wages are paid, the work is stayed." This Spanish proverb refers to workmen who lapse into a short period of idleness after receiving their wages.

**WAIF.** "Waifs and strays." Stolen goods abandoned by the thief are "waifs," and "strays" are domestic animals which have gone astray from their owners, and are lost either for the time being, or for good. Hence the homeless poor in London are called the "waifs and strays of London streets."

**WAIT.** "To wait on a person" is to visit him, and in this sense the word "wait" should never be used, without the preposition "on." It would be wrong to say "the deputation has not yet waited, as resolved." It should be "the deputation has not yet waited on such and such a person."

**WALK.** "To walk chalks." A sort of ordeal used on board ship to test drunkenness. Two parallel lines are chalked on the deck, and if the suspect can walk between them without overstepping either, he is declared to be sober. "To walk the hospital." When there were no medical colleges, students attached themselves to one or other of the London hospitals with a view to qualify themselves as a doctor; hence the expression means to study medicine with a view to become a doctor. "To walk into a person." To scold a person. "To walk into food." To eat heartily.

**WALL.** The expressions "to go to the wall" or "to be driven to the wall," signify the last chance. When a man in a fight is in extremity, he places his back to the wall, so that his enemy cannot come behind him which enables him to defend himself in front only. Wallflower. This term is applied to a lady who finds no partners at a dance.

**WALNUT.** It comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wealh*, meaning foreign, and *nut*, meaning a nut, hence its literal meaning is a foreign nut. Some think that walnut is a corruption of "Gaulnut," that is the nut of Gaul, or France. The first explanation seems to be more feasible, as walnut comes from Persia, and not from France.

**WANDERING JEW.** A purely fictitious person who committed the offence of insulting Christ just previous to His Crucifixion, and who in consequence was condemned to wander on earth until Christ's second coming. A person who has taken to wandering about here and there is figuratively called a Wandering Jew.

**WANT.** Tooke suggests that "want" is the past participle of *wane*. This word has different significations in different

localities. In Norfolk it is applied to that which is actually needed, as "one may want a dinner." In Scotland, "want" means, "Can't do without," as in the sentence "He is a man we can't want" meaning "he is a man whose aid and advice are indispensable."

**WANT, NEED.** "Want" is less strong than "need." One may want a thing, but may not need it. One needs what is essential. "Want" is more in the nature of a wish, which one can do without.

**WANTON.** This word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *wan* meaning wanting, and *towen*, the past participle of *teon*, meaning to draw or to educate. So *wanton* meant literally not (well) brought up. Hence a spoilt child was called a wanton child, and since such a child developed the characteristics of perversity and self-indulgence, the word "wanton" came to mean "perverse," or "self-indulgent." It also came to mean "playful" or "sportive" in an innocent way, and this gradually gave rise to the evil sense of loose morals. "She is a wanton" means that she is a loose woman.

**WAR.** This is a very old word in the English language dating as far back as 1017. It is cognate with the old French *Warre*, which was derived from the old High German *Warre*, meaning strife and confusion.

**WARDEN, GUARDIAN.** Many Anglo-Saxon words and names began with "w." When the Normans came, they substituted "U," as there was no "W" in their language. To simplify the pronunciation, they put a "G" before "U" and thus "Warden" became "Guardian."

**WARMING-PAN.** A *locum tenens*; a substitute; a person who holds another's office or post during absence or while qualifying for it. Sometimes it is written W.P.

**WARP.** "The history of the different English verbs that have successively expressed the general idea of 'throwing' is curious. The earliest of our verbs to be used in this sense was *warp* (A.-S. *weorpan*), which is cognate with the German *werfen*. The German verb has retained its general sense of 'throw' down to the present time. The English *warp*, however, was ousted by *cast* (a borrowing from the Scandinavian). *Warp* did not go out of existence, but was limited or specialised to a particular kind of throwing. A piece of wood, which, in drying, throws itself out of the plane, is said to *warp*, and we speak, figuratively, of the *warping* of a man's judgment by prejudice. Thus a word of completely general signification has become extremely special."—Greenough and Kittredge—*Words and their Ways in English Speech*.

**WARP AND WOOF.** These terms are used in weaving cloth. The threads running lengthwise, in web, are called the warp, while the threads intersecting the warps at right angles are

called the woof. Figuratively "warp and woof" are used by writers as illustrative of character and life. Gray uses these terms in one of his poems in the said sense.

**WASH.** "To wash one's hands of." To refuse to have anything to do with. "Wash your dirty linen at home." Settle your private family squabbles and differences at home, and do not make them public.

**WASP.** A wasps' nest. A place where there are lots of enemies, hence a place where one is not welcomed. "As quiet as a wasp in one's nose." Very much alive.

**WASSAIL-BOWL.** "Wassail originally means a drinking of a health, coming as it does from two Anglo-Saxon words, *wesan*, meaning "to be," and *hael*, meaning health. A wassail-bowl was a large silver cup in which the Saxons drank health to one another at their entertainments.

**WASTER.** A spendthrift; a wastrel.

**WATER.** "To throw cold water on one's enterprise." To discourage one in the promotion of one's enterprise. "In deep water." In trouble or difficulties. "Of the first water." Originally this term was applied to most precious stones, as "A diamond of the first water" means a diamond of the highest type, and hence most precious. "To hold water." To be tenable. "To make the mouth water." To cause longing. "To be in hot water," to be in difficulties. "The big water-hole." The ocean. "Water-logged." When a ship leaks, and is prevented from moving by too much water in the hold, it is said to be water-logged, because in that case it lies on the surface of the water like a log.

**WAX.** "To wax fat and kick." (Biblical.) To become unruly through great prosperity. "In a wax." Angry. "Don't get into a wax for nothing."

**WAY.** "In a way." In a certain sense. "In a fair way of." Likely to, as "He is in a fair way of making money." "To make one's way." To be prosperous. "Out of the way." Strange. "By the way." A phrase used with incidental remarks, which are off the main point. "To give way." To submit; to yield.

**WAYS AND MEANS.** "Ways and means" is a Parliamentary term used to signify necessary funds and the manner of procuring them. It is now used in a general sense.

**WEAK.** "Weak as a cat." Very feeble, always applied to physical weakness. A similar expression is "As weak as water," but it is used both of moral and of physical weakness.

**WEAR.** In Old English the verb "wear" (*wērian*) had one signification, *i.e.* that of "having on," or "being clothed with." But as wearing a garment for a long time would eventually make it unfit for use, the verb "wear" came to have two significations, *i.e.* the action of wearing, and its

consequence, in Middle English. Later on, it came to be used in the sense of to make unfit for use, only, and this sense became general. We use the verb "wear" not only in connection with garments, but other objects as well, as, for instance, "a constitution worn by dissipation." It should be observed, however, that the double meaning of the word sometimes gives rise to ambiguity, thus, "A dress that is much worn" may either mean a fashionable style of dress, or a garment that is worn out. When used intransitively, it has quite a contradictory sense. "To want a cloth that will wear," is to want a cloth that would last in wear. "Wear and tear." Damage resulting from constant use, and occasional accidents. "To wear one's heart upon one's sleeve." It is a Shakespearean phrase, and means to expose one's secret intentions to unfeeling criticism. "Wear out." It means "to exhaust," or "to spoil by wear," as "A worn-out constitution," or "A worn-out garment."

**WEARY.** This word is connected with the Anglo-Saxon *worien*, to wander, or to travel from *wor*, a swampy place. The original meaning, therefore, of "weary" would be tramping over wet and swampy places, which would necessarily be fatiguing.

**WEATHER.** "The weather eye." It is a sea phrase and means the eye of a keen observer. "Under the weather." This expression is colloquially used in the sense of "somewhat ill," as though one were depressed by the weather. "Weather-cocks." "Vanes" were anciently made in the form of a cock (hence called weather-cocks), and put up in Papal times to remind the clergy of watchfulness. The custom of adorning the tops of steeples with a cross and a cock is derived from the Goths, who bore that as their warlike ensign. "Weather-gage." "To get the weather-gage of a person" is to get an advantage over him, just as a ship gets the weather-gage of another when it has got to the windward thereof. "To weather a storm." When a ship successfully withstands a storm with strong gales, it is said to weather a storm.

**WEB OF LIFE.** The Three Fates, according to the Roman mythology, spin the thread of life, and hence the expression means "Destiny from the cradle to the grave."

**WEDGE.** "The thin end of the wedge." The first beginning, which in itself is small, but leads to something serious and important. It should be noted that the expression should always be "The thin end of the wedge," and not "a thin end of the wedge," as a wedge has only one thin end or edge.

**WEDLOCK.** The sense of an indissoluble union contained in the word "wedlock" is only implied in "wed," which Anglo-Saxon word means a pledge. "Lock" is equivalent

to *lac*, a gift, being a reference to the gift which it was customary for the husband to bestow upon the wife.

**WEDNESDAY.** Anglo-Saxon *wodnesdag*, from Odin, the god of storms.

**WEED.** This is one of those original words which preserve their special sense. In Shakspere's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is used for garment, and this sense still survives in "widow's weeds."

**WEEK-END.** A short holiday from Saturday afternoon to Monday morning is a week-end holiday, the phrase "week-end" having come into the language recently. It has now become quite popular.

**WEeping CROSS.** "To go by Weeping Cross" is to repent or to grieve. Weeping crosses in old times were those where penitents offered their devotions. "Weeping philosopher." A Greek philosopher by name Heraclitus felt so keenly and deeply for the follies of mankind that he wept bitterly over them, and finally divorced himself from the world and withdrew into the mountains. He was called the Weeping Philosopher, because of the ceaseless tears he shed over human frailties and follies.

**WELL.** "Well, I never!" It is an exclamation of surprise. "Well and good." When this phrase is used, it signifies that the result is satisfactory.

**WELSHER (WELCHER).** It is a sporting term. A swindling bookmaker who disappears from the raccourse as soon as the winning horse comes in. Originally it means "failure."

**WENCH.** Although this word now suggests the idea of impudence or lightness, it is still used by country folk in the ordinary sense of "woman." In this sense the word "wench" can be compared with the French *grâce*, meaning "lass" but nowadays hardly a girl would like to be called a lass, which at one time could safely be applied to the Virgin Mary herself.

**WET.** "With a wet finger." The allusion in this phrase is to the old custom of the spinner wetting the forefinger with the mouth, while spinning. Hence the expression is "easily" or "directly." "Wet-bob," and "Dry-bob." Eton slang. The former is used of a boy who takes to boating; the latter of a boy who takes to cricket. "To have a wet." To have a drink. "To wet one's whistle." Probably a corruption of "Whet one's whittle," "whittle" being a common name for a scythe. The phrase means to take a drink. In harvest time a man generally takes a drop or two of beer or cider, when he stops work for sharpening his tools, and as "whetting the whittle" and drinking a draught of liquor went together, the phrase "wetting the whistle" came to mean to moisten the throat by drinking. "Wet blanket." A person who puts a damper on other

people's spirits, is called a "wet blanket," just as a wet blanket put over a fire damps it and gradually extinguishes it.

**WHALE.** The phrase, "Very like a whale" expresses disbelief, or improbability, and is used by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*.

**WHALER.** In America anything of a very great size is so called. In provincial English, the word is applied to a big, strong, powerful fellow. No doubt there is reference in this to the enormous size and strength of the whale.

**WHAT.** "I tell you what." When a new point strikes a speaker, he makes use of this phrase as an introduction to what is to follow, the word "What" being employed to emphasize the statement which follows. In the midst of his speech, he suddenly exclaimed: "I tell you what—I shall change my course of conduct and adopt different tactics with the opposite party." "What not." This clause in the sense of *et cetera* is used to cut short a lengthy and tedious enumeration of things, as "He was gorging himself with apples, oranges, sweetmeats, and goodness knows what not?" "What of that." This phrase is used to signify "it matters little." When a person tells you that he happened to lose his hat, you remark, "What of that?" *i.e.*, it is of no consequence. "He knows what is what." This colloquial expression means "he knows what is the right thing to do under all circumstances. He is a shrewd person, not to be taken in." Similarly, "I know what is what" means "I am well-informed." "What with." It means "partly with." A sentence invariably opens with this phrase, and it embodies a multiplicity of things which hinder one. "What with arranging the material and writing the book, and studying for my law examinations, I had no time to write long letters home." "What is he?" means "What is his calling?" "What" when applied to persons, refers to one's profession or occupation.

**WHEEL.** "Wheel of Fortune." The inconstancy of Fortune is represented by Fortuna, the Goddess, who holds a wheel in her hand. "To have wheels in the head." This is a slang substitute for "to be eccentric," "peculiar," or "erratic."

**WHEREABOUTS.** Like the word "news" this word, though plural in form is singular in construction, and hence takes a verb in the singular. "His whereabouts is unknown to me."

**WHETSTONE.** "It is a custom in the North, when a man tells the greatest lye in the company, to reward him with a whetstone." When Sir K. Digby boasted of having seen the Philosopher's Stone in his travels which he could not describe, Lord Bacon sarcastically remarked, "Perhaps it was a whetstone," meaning that Sir K. Digby was only romancing (telling a lie).

**WHIG.** There are many theories as to the origin of this name for a political party. But the most plausible theory is that which ascribes its origin to the initials of the motto of the Liberal Party in Oliver Cromwell's time, "We hope in God."

**WHILE, WILE.** Wile is the same word as guile. Even most educated people write "While away the time," but it ought to be "wile away the time." "While" means time as a long while, but "wile" has the meaning of "guile," or "beguile."

**WHILING-TIME.** The waiting a little time before dinner. Addison uses this expression in his *Spectator*, No. 448.

**WHIP.** "To have the whip hand," is to have the power of ruling, hence, absolute control. "Whipper-in." "A semi-official functionary in connection with Parliament, whose duty it is to bring together the members of the party for whom he acts when their votes are required. He is otherwise expected by the exercise of judgment and tact to maintain harmony and loyalty in the political ranks."

**WHISKY.** It is difficult to believe that the strong spirit which contains alcohol literally means water. It comes from the Gaelic *uisge* (or *uisge*) a contraction of *Uisage-beatha* i.e. "Water of life."

**WHISPER, WHISTLE.** These words are derived from the sounds they reproduce, and are therefore of imitative origin, probably suggested by the wind which whispers and whistles.

**WHITE.** "Whitebofs." A band of lawless men committed great excesses in Ireland in 1761, and they wore their white shirts outside their dresses, which gave rise to the name. "Whitebait dinner." An annual festival celebrated by the members of the English Cabinet before the close of the Parliamentary session. On this occasion all formalities are dispensed with, and the dinner is so called because the fish known as whitebait forms the principal comestible. "The White House." A name given to the official residence of the President of the United States of America, at Washington, the capital. "White elephant." To have a white elephant to keep. To have an expensive, but unprofitable dignity to support, or a pet article to take care of. It is said that the King of Siam gives a present of a white elephant to such of his courtiers and servants as he wishes to ruin. Siam is called "The Land of the White Elephant." "At a white heat." In a great passion or anger. "A white lie, or fib." A statement verbally true, but essentially false. "White as a sheet." Intensely pale. "A whitened sepulchre." Something which is outwardly fair, but inwardly rotten.

**WHITEN.** To whiten and to bleach are not one and the same. "To whiten" is "to cover with a coating of white" so as to hide dirt or discoloration. "To bleach," or "to blanch" is to remove the colouring matter, leaving only whiteness.

**WHO GOES HOME?** (Parliamentary.) It is the last call of a finished session—the last, and when the House breaks up. At one time certain Members used to accompany the Speaker home, and the cry in the House was "Who goes home?" meaning, "Who accompanies the Speaker?" Now

when this call is given, the Speaker shakes hands with each Member, as he passes the Clerk's table.

**WIDE.** "Wide-awake hats." This name was wittily given by someone to the felt hats, because they never have a nap. "There is a wide gulf fixed between them." They are separated from each other, and the cause seems to be great and permanent. "To give a wide berth to a person." To avoid a person.

**WIDOW WOMAN.** The word widow should not be used with the word woman, as widow applies only to a woman. "Widow woman" is a pleonasm.

**WIFEY.** A term of endearment for wives.

**WIG.** It is an abbreviation of the word periwig, which was a corruption of the French *perruque*. "To get a wiggling." To be scolded.

**WILD.** Colloquially it is used for "angry" as in the expression "I am wild with you." "Wild cat schemes." This refers to Bank enterprises which are thoroughly worthless. It is also applied to other schemes which are not properly controlled. "Wild goose chase." Any foolish and thoughtless undertaking. If a man with a sovereign in his pocket suddenly takes it into his head to go on the Stock Exchange to make £50 out of it, he goes on a wild goose chase. "Wild oats." Youthful pranks.

**WILDERNESS.** Originally this word was written "Wild-dearness" which meant a place of wild deer or wild beasts. The "deer" then signified any untamed beast, and was not restricted to one species as it is now.

**WILDERNESS, DESERT.** "Wilderness" suggests the idea of wild beasts and may abound in trees and thus be a forest, whereas a desert does not. It carries with it the idea of solitude, but it is not necessarily void of means of life, though it is uncultivated. Thus when we use the expression "A voice in the wilderness," we mean "A voice uttered in a place where there is none to echo it," and metaphorically a solitary opinion which none will back up. "Desert" is that which is barren, and where there is no life or cultivation. A desert is not necessarily unfruitful, e.g. the desert air is generally vital enough for the growth of flowers. Note Gray's famous lines:—

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

**WILL, TESTAMENT.** Although these words are usually taken for synonyms, there is a distinction worth noting. "Will" relates to what is "real," i.e. freehold or landed property, while "Testament" relates merely to personality. The "Testament" disposes of all personality, and the bequests are described as being witnessed by four persons who are named.



**WILLOW.** "To wear the willow." (a) To occupy the lowest seat, (b) to be in mourning, and (c) to be forsaken.

**WILLY-NILLY.** This is the ordinary pronunciation of "will-he, nill-he," meaning whether he will or not.

**WIN.** "To win at a canter." When a horse wins a race in a canter, it shows that he has gained an easy victory, and hence it means to gain an easy victory.

**WIND.** "In the wind." About to happen, signifying probability. "To wind up." To settle, to conclude, as the winding up of a company. "To get wind." To be talked about, as "the rumour got wind that what he did, he did to serve his own ends." "To get wind of." To obtain news about something. "To go to the winds." To be utterly lost, to be dissipated. The same as "to go to the dogs." "To raise the wind." To raise necessary funds. "I will wind your cotton." I will give you some trouble. A similar expression among the Greeks was "I will spin such a thread that they shall not be able to unravel it."

**WINDBAG.** A vulgar term for a boastful talker.

**WINDOW.** Before glass was invented, windows were used more for ventilation than for light. The very word itself conveys that sense, being derived from Icelandic *vindauga*, the literal meaning of which is "wind-eye" (*vinde*, the wind, and *auga*, an eye).

**WINE, LIQUOR.** Wine comes from the Latin *viere*, to twist together, and is the juice extracted from grapes, which are twisted (squeezed) for that purpose. Hence the word is properly applied to the juice of grapes and other fruits such as currants, gooseberries, &c. This word should not be supposed to have any connection with vine in that sense. Liquor comes from the *liquere* meaning to be liquid; and is any liquid substance which is alcoholic or spirituous, and which is either distilled or fermented, such as whisky, brandy, &c. Beer, too, is liquor, though it goes by the name of beverage.

**WINEY.** Intoxicated.

**WING.** "To clip another's wings." To hamper another's movements. "To take under one's wing." To protect. "To lend wings to." To increase the speed of. "To take wing." To depart suddenly.

**WINK.** This word was very commonly used in the sense of "to shut the eyes." In the figurative phrase, "to wink at," which means to connive, it still retains the idea of shutting one's eyes to what is going on. "To wink at." (a) To give a hint or signal to another, where a mutual understanding exists, and (b) to take no notice of, as "the mother winked at the child's naughty behaviour."

**WIPE.** A pocket-handkerchief. Nose-wipe means also handkerchief.

**WISE.** "Wise men of Gotham." This appellation was given

to the men of Gotham by way of irony, on account of their stupidity, for which they became proverbial.

**WISEACRE.** There runs the story that a country gentleman boasted no end of times of his landed property within Ben Jonson's hearing. The great wit and poet, through sheer exasperation said "What signify to us your dirt and your elods? Where you have an acre of land, I have ten acres of wit." Thereupon the countryman retorted by calling Ben Jonson "Good Mr. Wiseacre." We give this story for what it is worth, but "wiseacre" is a corruption of the German *weissager* meaning sooth-sayer, or prophet. This word has lost its original meaning and is now applied to dunces.

**WISH, WANT, DESIRE.** Want sometimes means to go without. Desire is a stronger word than wish.

**WISH-WASH.** A reduplication of wash. It is any thin liquor for drinking.

**WISHY-WASHY.** A reduplication of washy. It means thin, sloppy, said of soup, tea, talk, &c.

**WIT, HUMOUR.** "The earliest meaning of wit was knowledge; and this meaning is still found in witness, 'our five wits,' 'At one's wit's end,' &c. In the eighteenth century it meant mental ability, it now means the sudden discovery of unexpected likenesses. Humour belongs to character. Sidney Smith was a wit; Thackeray was a humorist."—Meiklejohn, *The Art of Writing English*. "In wit, if by wit be meant the power of perceiving analogies between things which appear to have nothing in common, Bacon never had an equal."—Macaulay. "Humour is a mixture of love and wit."—Thackeray. "Humour is something genial and loving."—Dr. Bain.

**WITCH.** The Anglo-Saxon word was *wicca*, the feminine of *wicca*, a wizard. *Wicca* comes from *witan* meaning to know, to see, and hence, a wizard meant a seer. "To be no witch." To be quite sharp.

**WITENAGEMOT.** A Saxon term which literally signifies an assembly or council of men of wisdom or wit. It was the Anglo-Saxon Parliament.

**WITH.** "With a good grace, and with a bad grace." Graciously and ungraciously. When you help a person and at the same time take him to task, by preaching to him, you help with a bad grace, *i.e.* not in a pleasant manner. "With life many things are remedied." This Spanish proverb is equivalent to "While there is life, there is hope."

**WITHDRAW.** When a speaker in either House of Parliament shows bad taste, or makes a personal allusion, in his speech, he is called upon to withdraw.

**WITHIN THE PALE.** After the invasion of Ireland by Henry II., the boundary of that part of Ireland which became subject to English dominion, came to be called "the Pale." The limits "within the pale" seldom exceeded the

modern province of Leinster. The word "pale" is allied to the English "paling" a wooden fence.

**WITHSAY.** This old simple word has now been replaced by "gainsay," "gain" meaning against, and that is the same as the Latin synonym *contradict*. Withsay, the native word, is pure Anglo-Saxon, and the substitution is of course due to the influence of learning.

**WITHSTAND.** Originally the preposition "with" signified "against" or "in opposition to," but it has now lost that meaning, except in such compounds as withstand, or "withhold."

**WITTICISM.** Dryden innovated this word, says Johnson. The line is "A mighty witticism—pardon a new word."

**WIZARD.** It originally meant a wise man. Spenser uses it in that sense in his *Faerie Queene* and Milton calls the wise men from the East wizards in his Ode on the Nativity. The wizards were the Magi.

**WOBBLE, WABBLE.** Literally it means to rock from side to side, as in walking. Hence, to move unsteadily also to hesitate, blow hot and cold, &c. Anything shaky or unsteady is wobbly, and it can be easily imagined why a boiled leg of mutton is called a wobbler. It not only blows hot and cold, but it wobbles on the plate.

**WOLF.** (In music.) The one false note which is found in almost all the stringed instruments is called "a wolf" by musicians. "Wolf's head." In Anglo-Saxon times, an outlawed felon was said to have a wolf's head, and, anyone finding him anywhere out of the country had a right to kill him by knocking him on the head, and the head was taken to the King. The outlaw was looked upon as nothing more than a beast, especially as a wolf, the enemy of man. "A wolf in sheep's clothing." A person who pretends to be harmless, but is really dangerous.

**WONDER, SURPRISE.** "Wonder" is a variation of wander, because when we wonder at a thing, our mind wanders and does not remain in its normal condition, or, in other words, wonder throws the mind off its basis. Surprise is a compound of sur and prize, or, is derived from the Latin *super* and *prehendere*, meaning to take abruptly. Hence anything that surprises us takes us unawares, as its derivation implies. In the case of wonder, the thinking faculty is suspended, as it passes our comprehension. The creation of God is a wonder. Surprise, which is momentary, is only a kind of wonder. It does not imply a suspension of thought. We are surprised if that does not happen which we expect, as the failure of a student in his examination whom we had expected to take class.

**WOODBINE, WOODBIND.** It should be remembered that these are two distinct plants. The woodbine is the honey-

suckle and the woodbind is the wild convolvulus. Woodbine is a great favourite of poets.

**WOODEN.** "The wooden spoon." This is supposed to be the prize conferred on the lowest graduate in a college list. "To wear the wooden sword." To keep back sales by asking too high a price. At one time, fools used to wear wooden swords.

**WOOL.** (Slang.) Pluck. "You are not half-wool" is a term of reproach from one thief to another. "Wool-gathering." Applied to absent-mindedness, as much as to say that one's wits are wandering. "His wits have gone a wool-gathering." "Keep your wool on." Don't get angry; keep quiet. Wool, as a verb, means to rumple the hair. "Woolsack." Wool has always been a great source of the national wealth of England, and in the reign of Queen Elizabeth an Act was passed prohibiting the exportation of this fabric. As a constant reminder of its importance to the nation, woolsacks were placed in the House of Lords as seats for the judges. Hence the seat in the House of Lords of the Lord Chancellor of England is called the Woolsack, and "to sit on the Woolsack" is to be Lord Chancellor of England.

**WORD.** "To have words." To have a quarrel or a heated argument.

**WORK.** "To work the ropes." To control and manage a scheme without being observed. "Working like a nigger." Working as hard as one possibly can. I take the following from *Pearson's Weekly* dated week ending 17th January, 1914:—"Working like a nigger" was a phrase current a good many years ago, when negroes were slaves and had to work, whether they liked it or not. In those days, negroes really did put their backs to it in the broiling sun, while their inhuman owners lolled at their ease in the shade, or got up to urge them on with the long whips they generally carried. "Nigger," by the way, does not come from the word "negro," but from the old English word *negar*, the original term for a black man.

**WORLD.** All the Scandinavian languages have this word in cognate forms, which shows that the word is a composite one. The Icelandic *verr*, the old High German *wer*, the Anglo-Saxon *wer*, and the Gothic *wair*, are cognate with the Latin *vir*, meaning a man, and the terminals "old" in Icelandic, *ylde* in the Anglo-Saxon, *elde* in the Middle English—all these imply age, old age. Hence, world literally means age of man, or course of life. "To go to the world" originally meant "to be married," and we find it in Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*; Beatrice says:—"Every-one goes to the world but I; and I may sit in a corner and cry heigho for a husband." A "woman of the world" then meant a married woman. Shakespeare has it in *As You Like It*. "The world, the flesh, and the devil." Love of

pleasure, sensual indulgence, and vicious propensities. "He renounces the world, the flesh and the devil, preaches and prays day and night."—Halliburton.

**WORSE.** This comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wyrs*. The "s" is a part of the derivation, and therefore, "worsen" would be the more proper form—and was actually in use in the sixteenth century, though now considered ungrammatical. In the same manner "worst" is a contraction of "worseth." "The worse half." The husband is so called in a playful manner, as opposed to "better half" for a wife.

**WORST.** "If the worst comes to the worst." In the event of things turning out very badly.

**WORSTED.** "Worsted" was first spun at Worsted, in Norfolk in 1340, and stockings made of this material were at first only worn by the common people. Hence the phrase "worsted-stocking knave," used by Shakespeare is a term of contempt.

**WORTH.** As a verb this word is no longer used. But formerly it was used in the sense of betide. Sir Walter Scott has:—

"Wo worth the chase—wo worth the day  
That costs thy life, my gallant gray."

Worth is also a suffix, in the names of English places, when its meaning is that of "ton" or "garth." It denotes a place standing "on a tongue of land between two rivers, or formed by the loop-like bending of one. Tamworth, Bedworth, Kenilworth, Wandsworth, &c., are cases in point. "Not worth the candle." Not profitable, not advantageous. As to the origin of this expression, *Pearson's Weekly* dated week ending January 27, 1914, has the following:—"Peter the Great of Russia was out with a companion upon a hunting expedition; and, being lost in the forest, the two were overcome by cold and hunger. Greatly to their joy they found a lonely hut, the owner of which, a woodman, kept fowls. The Czar gladly gave a candle in exchange for one of the woodman's birds, but even his hunger and cold did not prevent him from finding the fowl tough and unpalatable. The monarch returned to his companion and said 'The game was not worth the candle,' and thus the origin of the phrase."

**WOULD-BE.** Intended, as "a would-be author."

**W.P.** Weather permitting.

**WRECK.** It comes from "wrack" which is the name given to sea-weeds cast upon the shore. Hence the word "wreckage" which means something cast up.

**WRETCH.** We get this word from the Anglo-Saxon *wrecca*, to drive out, and hence wretch literally means "one driven out." It was formerly used by way of ironical pity as "illustrious wretch"; but it can also be used by way of

genuine pity, as, "Oh, poor wretch. I wish I could help him." "Wretchlessness." "To understand this word we have only to look at it when divested of its initial 'w,' and then to remember that an ancient Saxon 'c' at the end of a syllable commonly developed into tch, and in this way we get back to the verb to reck, to care for, so that 'wretchlessness' really means "recklessness" or caring for nothing, although the words look so unlike."—Earle, *Philology of the English Tongue*.

**WRIGHT.** In Scotland a carpenter is known by the name of wright.

**WRITE.** The original sense of the word was to cut, to engrave, as shown in the Anglo-Saxon word *writan*. This takes us back to the time when all the writing was cut and engraved in stones. "To write up" is a modern phrase which signifies "to bring into public notice either an author or his work by giving a favourable review or account." "To write up a pass-book" is to post it up, that is to enter all the banking accounts up to date. When a firm finds out that it is hopeless to recover the debts due to it, it writes them off, *i.e.* cancels them by striking them off its account books.

**WRITE YOU.** We commonly use the expression "I write you" for "I write to you" which grammar does not sanction. "Write" without "to" is now permissible in commercial letters only. It should be carefully noted that where an object is expressed, the preposition "to" may be omitted. "I wrote you a letter" for "I wrote a letter to you" is permissible, but "I wrote you" simply is not grammatically correct.

**WRONG.** "You have got hold of the wrong end of the stick." You have completely misunderstood the whole thing. When you catch hold of the toe end of the stick, which is covered with dirt, you soil your hand instead of supporting your feet. "The wrong side of sixty." More than sixty years of age, as, she is on the wrong side of sixty. "To have got up on the wrong side of the bed." A person who is fretful and peevish all day long is said to have got out of bed the wrong way, *i.e.*, the wrong side of the bed.

**WROTE LIKE AN ANGEL.** The word "angel" in this phrase is a corruption of Angelo. Isaac Disraeli in his *Curiosities of Literature* says:—"This fanciful phrase has a very human origin. Among those learned Greeks who emigrated to Italy, and some afterwards into France, in the reign of Francis I., was one Angelo Verjecto, whose beautiful calligraphy excited the admiration of the learned. The French Monarch had a Greek fount cast, modelled by his writing. His name became synonymous for beautiful writing, and gave birth to that familiar phrase, "to write like an angel."

**W.S.P.U.** Women's Social and Political Union. It is an organisation founded by Mrs. Pankhurst and assisted by Miss Christabel Pankhurst. The W.S.P.U. policy and programme are framed, and the word of command is given, by Mrs. Pankhurst and Miss Christabel Pankhurst. *The Suffragette* is the weekly official organ of the Women's Social and Political Union, and is edited by Miss Christabel Pankhurst, LL.B., LL.D.

## X.

**X.** Numerically it means ten. Originally it was made up of two V's (V meaning five). These two V's were placed one above the other, thus  $\begin{smallmatrix} V \\ V \end{smallmatrix}$ , and then the lower one was inverted, taking the form of X. In ordinary writing, "X" stands for Christ, and it then represents the Greek  $\chi$ . We have Xmas for Christmas. The sign of an X on a beer-barrel shows that the beer which the barrel contains has been paid for to the amount of 10s. as duty. "XX" and "XXX" on beer-barrels are mere trade marks to show that the beer it contains is twice or three times as strong as the beer contained in the ten-shilling barrel. "To take one X (or letter X)." To capture a desperate prisoner. The captive is firmly grasped by the collar by two constables who draw his arm down, and force his hand backwards over their own arms which hold him. In this position the prisoner is likely to break his arm in his attempt to free himself.

**XERES.** Sherry wine is also called Xeres on account of the fact that it was brought from Xeres, a town in Spain.

**X.Y.Z., AN** (Literary.) A person under these initials advertised in *The Times*, offering to do all sorts of literary work at very moderate prices, and hence it means a common literary caterer.

## Y.

**YACHT.** It comes from the old Dutch *jachtan*, meaning to speed, and hence the vessel (yacht) on account of its speed.

**YAHOO.** This term is figuratively applied to a savage or a person of low and despicable character. Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* describes yahoos as a fictitious class of animals with the forms of men but with vicious propensities. They are subject to the horses endowed with human reason.

**YANKEE.** Various explanations are given as to the origin of this word. Some think that the word Yankee was merely an effort of the American Indians to imitate the sound of English, which they pronounced "Yankées." Skeat, however, thinks that the word "Yenkee" is connected with the Lowland Scotch "Yenkie," which carries with it the idea

of quick motion, and as Americans are noted for their alert action and quick wit, the word is applicable to them.

**YANKEE, DOODLE.** An American national air. Various accounts of its origin are given. It is most probable that the tune is English and is nearly one hundred and fifty years old. The original name of the song was "The Yankee's Return from Camp."

**YAPPY.** A slang term for "foolish." But this term is not used by persons careful of their diction.

**YARD.** At one time this was the general word for rod or wand. Tennyson's "Cheating Yardwand," is, therefore, a pleonasm. Yard in the sense of an enclosure is a separate word, and is related to garden.

**YARMOUTH BLOATER.** The origin of "Yarmouth bloater" is as startlingly mythical as the origin of roast pig. Nash tells the following story in his *Lenten Stufe* as to its origin:—"At a time when chimneys were not, and when coal was unknown, a fire of wood was placed in the centre of the principal room of the house, and the smoke was allowed to escape through the roof, a fisherman who had hung up several rows of fresh herrings, and forgotten to take them down for some time, found them, when he did so, of a golden colour, and the meat deliciously cured."

**YARN.** A long story or tale. "To spin a yarn" means to tell a tale or fib. "A sailor's yarn." A traveller's story.

**YEA AND NAY.** Yes and No. There used to be a clear distinction in the use of "Yea" and "Nay" and "Yes," and "No." "Yea" and "Nay" were answers to questions in the affirmative, for instance, "Will you do this?" Yea, or Nay. But if the question was formed in the negative, as "Won't you do this?" the answer was "Yes," or "No." "Yea and Nay" are no longer used.

**YEAR.** In Anglo-Saxon usage, the word year was used both as singular and plural, like sheep and deer. This use was maintained up to Shakespeare's time, who, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, says:—"A vile thief for this seven year." It must be noticed that this usage still survives in our modern phrase "A two-year-old child." "Civil year." For convenience sake the civil year is made to consist of 365 days, each of 24 hours. "Historical year." Legal year. Down to 1752 the historical year, in England, commenced January 1st; while the civil, ecclesiastical, and legal year, began on March 25th. These different dates led to much confusion; and thus, many events are recorded by one author as happening in a certain year, while another author assigns the date to the year succeeding. As instances of these discrepancies may be mentioned the execution of Charles I., variously stated to have taken place on the 30th January, 1648, and the 30th January, 1649. Also the Revolution, which drove James II. from the throne, which, according



to the testimony of two distinct authorities, occurred in February, 1688, and February, 1689.

**YEARN.** To yearn for or after home, affection, &c., or to yearn towards a person is to be filled with longing for the thing desired, and to be filled with compassion and tenderness for the person. Shakespeare uses it in the sense "mourn" :—

"Falstaff he is dead,

And we must yearn therefore."

**YELLOW.** "Yellow boy." A name for any gold coin, especially a sovereign, from the yellow colour of gold. "Yellow Peril." Ever since the Chinese adopted Western methods, there has been a fear of invasion by them. This is known as the Yellow Peril. "Yellow Press." This term is applied to journals of a sensational type, which are not particularly scrupulous. Originally applied to New York journals which were of an ultra sensational class, and which were printed on yellow paper.

**YEOMAN.** The origin of this word, as given by Skeat, is the Anglo-Saxon *ga*, a district or village, with the suffix "men." It signifies a person who by virtue of possessing free land of 40s. annual value could serve on juries and vote for knight of shire. To render "yeoman service" is to render help in time of need. "Yeoman of the Guard." Beef-eater. (Which see.)

**YESTERDAY.** The use of this word with the preposition "on" before it, is confined to America. "It was the intention to end in the Treasury Report, which has been so long delayed, on yesterday."—*New York Tribune*, Jan. 9th, 1852.

**YET, STILL.** Both these mean "up to the present time," but there is a slight difference in the exact significance. "Still" carries with it the impression of continuation or duration, as, "I am still writing to you," that is, I am writing to you now again, as I have written before. "Yet" calls one's attention as it were to a coming change, and when we want to speak of a new condition that has not yet begun, we use the adverb "yet" with the negative, as, "The resolution which was brought in had not yet been passed."

**YIELD, SUBMIT, SURRENDER.** Yield is generally used "both for submit and surrender; submit literally means to put under; surrender means to give up something."

**YOB.** Boy. It is an example of back slang.

**YOKE.** (Bible.) It was an emblem of subjection and slavery, while the removal of it signified deliverance. Hence the phrase "breaking the yoke" signifies the rejection of authority.

**YOKEL.** It was originally applied to one who yoked oxen or other animals. It is now applied to an awkward rustic, or country bumpkin.

**YORE.** Poetically "in days of yore" means in days of old, i.e., old times. Old English *geara*, of years (gear, year) formerly used as an adverb without "of."

**YORKSHIRE.** "Yorkshire compliment." A gift useless to the giver, and not wanted by the receiver. "Confident as a Yorkshire carrier." Cocksure. "Yorkshire estates." Money in prospect, a castle in the air. "I will do it when I come into my Yorkshire estate," means when I have the money. This phrase is attributed to Dr. Johnson. "To Yorkshire one," or "To Yorkshire over." To cheat; to take a person in.

**YOU AND ME, YOU AND I.** "You and me" should always be used in the objective sense, as, "Yesterday he saw you and me." "You and I" should always be used in the subjective sense, as "You and I are sure to be good friends." One often hears even English people say "It is me," which is absolutely ungrammatical. Of course, it should be "It is I." "You bet." This colloquial expression means "You may depend upon it," as, he seems set in for a century, you bet. A similar American expression is: "You bet your sweet life." "You had better do this." This is equivalent to "It is better that you should do this." In this phrase "better" is somewhat similar to "well" in meaning. The personal pronouns "he" and "I" can also be used.

**YOUNG.** "A young hopeful." A naughty boy is so called sarcastically. "Young man." Sweetheart; lover. When a girl says "He is my young man," she always means "He is my sweetheart or lover."

**YOUR.** "Your petitioners shall ever pray, &c." The phrase was formerly written at full length. In the case of a petition to the Crown, the part omitted was "for your Majesty's most prosperous reign," but if the petition was to Parliament, it ran "for the prosperous success of this high and honourable Court of Parliament."

**YULE.** "Yule-tide" is Christmas-time, but it has not been yet definitely settled why this term is applied to Christmas. Many solutions have been given, but Skcat prefers that which makes "Yule" signify noise or outcry, especially the sound of revelry and rejoicing.

## Z.

**ZAMORA.** "Zamora was not taken in an hour." This saying occurs in *Don Quixote*, and every reader of that immortal masterpiece must remember that Sancho Panza hardly opens his mouth unless there drops from it some proverb or other. This saying is similar to "Rome was not built in a day." Zamora is an ancient fortified city in Leon, and it took its captors years to take it, and hence the expression.

**ZANY.** This word Zany is an abbreviation of Italian *Giovanni*, meaning John. A buffoon, half-witted person, or merry-andrew is so called.

**ZEAL.** The literal meaning of the word is violent heat, being derived from the Greek *zeo*, meaning to boil. One may have a great amount of zeal or enthusiasm, either in a good or in a bad cause.

**ZEALOTS.** One of the faratical Jewish sects, which struggled desperately against the Roman Empire in A.D. 6-70. Hence a zealot is an extreme partisan, in other words, a fanatic.

**ZEBRA.** A kind of striped quadruped, resembling an ass or horse. A prison dress is called zebra, because of its being striped.

**ZENITH AND NADIR.** These are two Arabic words, now naturalised in England—"zenith" to signify the point of the heavens immediately above a spectator; "nadir" to denote the opposite, invisible point, immediately beneath him.—*Penny Cyclopædia*.

**ZEPHYR.** The west wind. The word comes from the Greek *zophos*, meaning the west. Poetically, any soft and mild breeze is called a zephyr.

**ZERO.** An Italian name for the arithmetical figure formed like the letter O.

**ZEST.** The literal meaning of this word is a piece of lemon-peel, coming as it does through the French *zeste*, from the Latin *schistus*, meaning divided. Hence it is used to signify that quality which gives a pleasant relish or taste.

**ZEUGMA.** "In the joining of two or more words (as nouns) to a third (as a verb) with which only one or a part of them can be made to agree except by using the nouns in different senses, or by taking the verb in different senses in relation to the different nouns, or by letting the underlying logical relation overrule the grammatical—in Greek a very common figure, but in English quite unusual, and ordinarily a violation of the principles of construction and a grave fault of diction. 'The *control*, as well as the *support*, which a father *exercises* over his family *were*, by the dispensation of Providence, withdrawn'; *control* is properly *exercised*, but *support* is not; the verb-form *were* is made plural to accord, not with the grammatical relation of *control* and *support*, but with the logical relation underlying *as well as* regarded as equivalent to *and*."—*Standard Dictionary*.

**ZOO.** Short for Zoological Gardens in London.

**ZOUNDS.** An oath, meaning "God's wounds."







